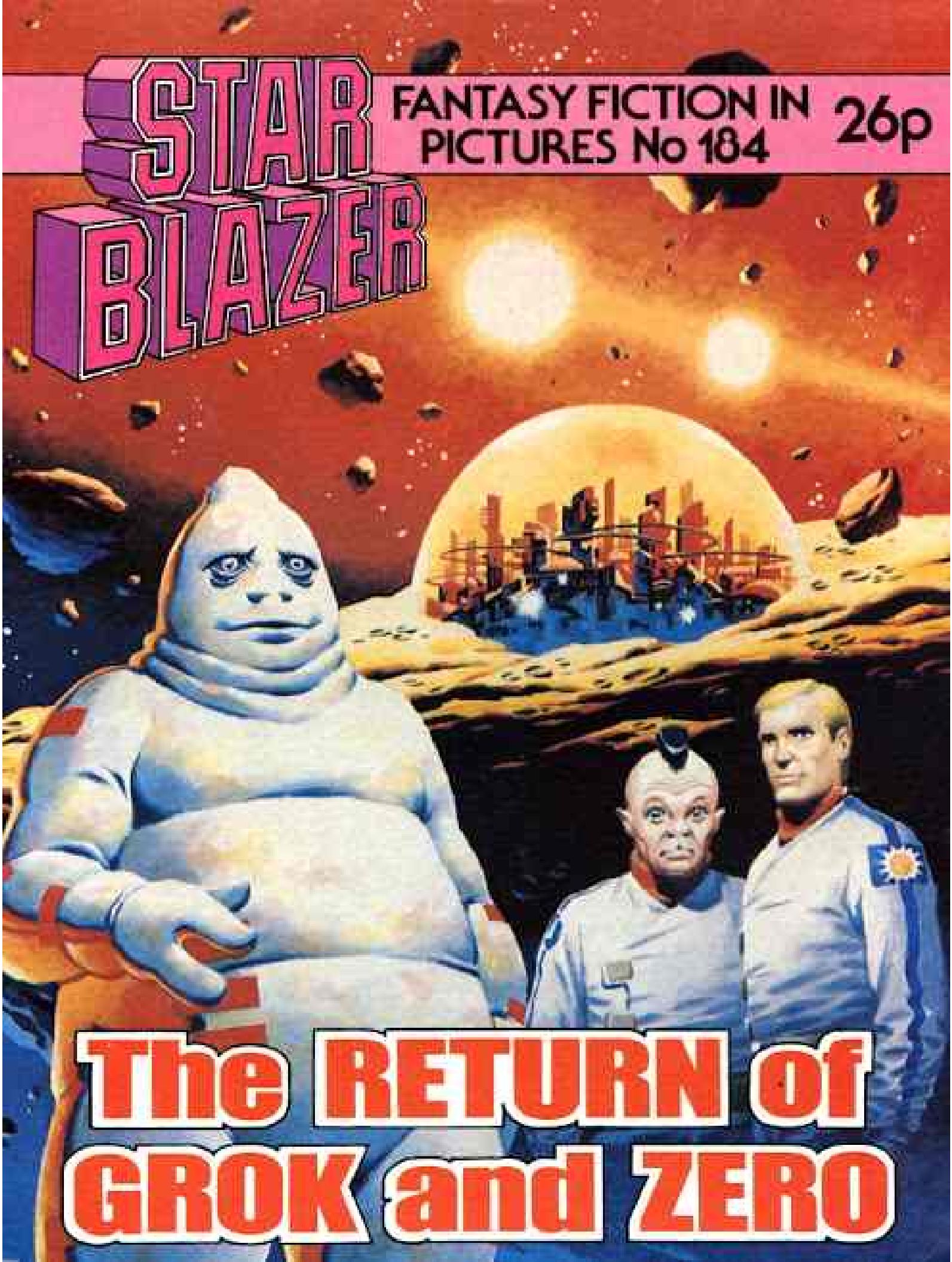
STAR BLAZER

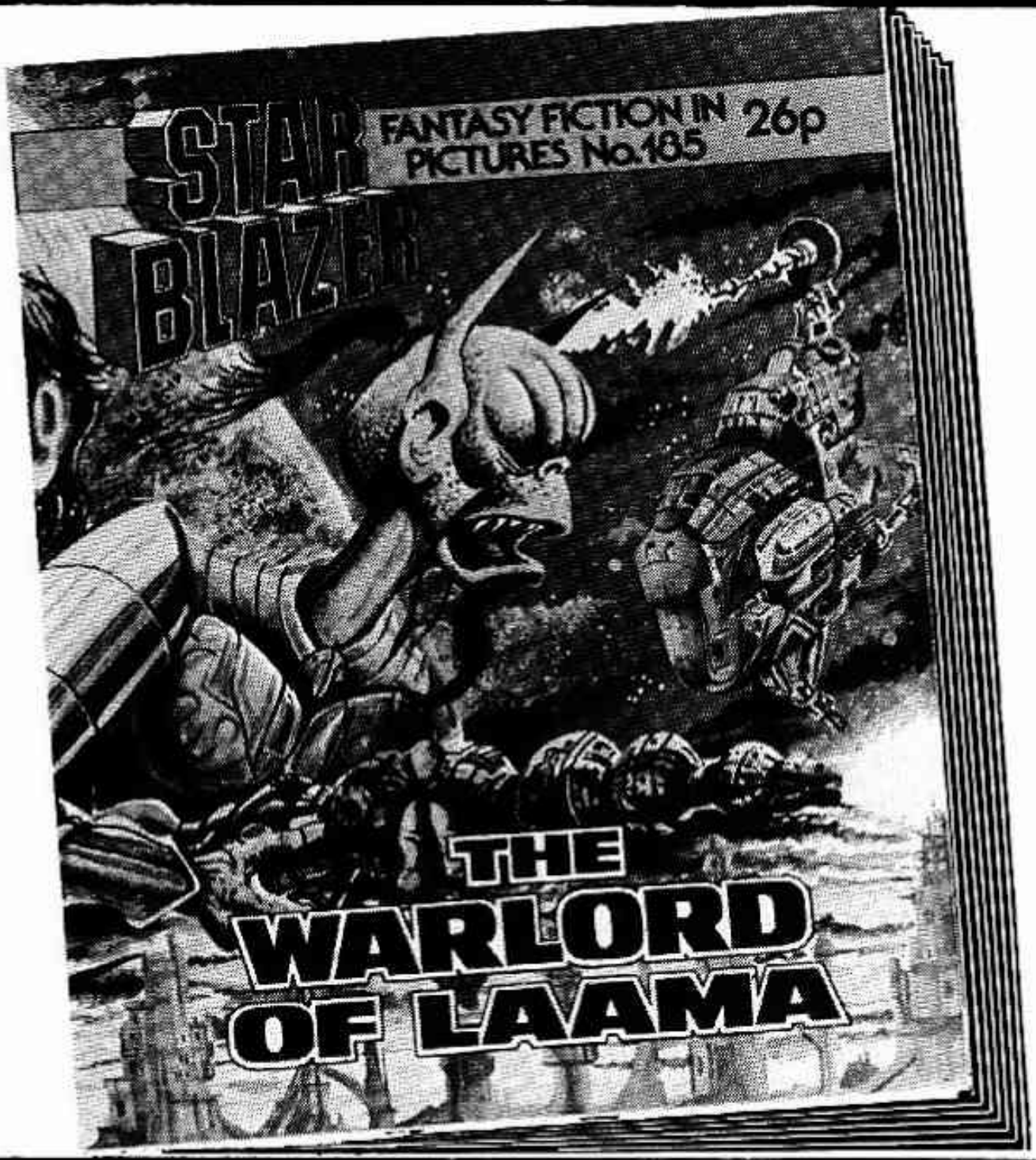
FANTASY FICTION IN PICTURES No 184

26p



The RETURN of GROK and ZERO

DON'T FORGET THIS MONTH'S *OTHER*



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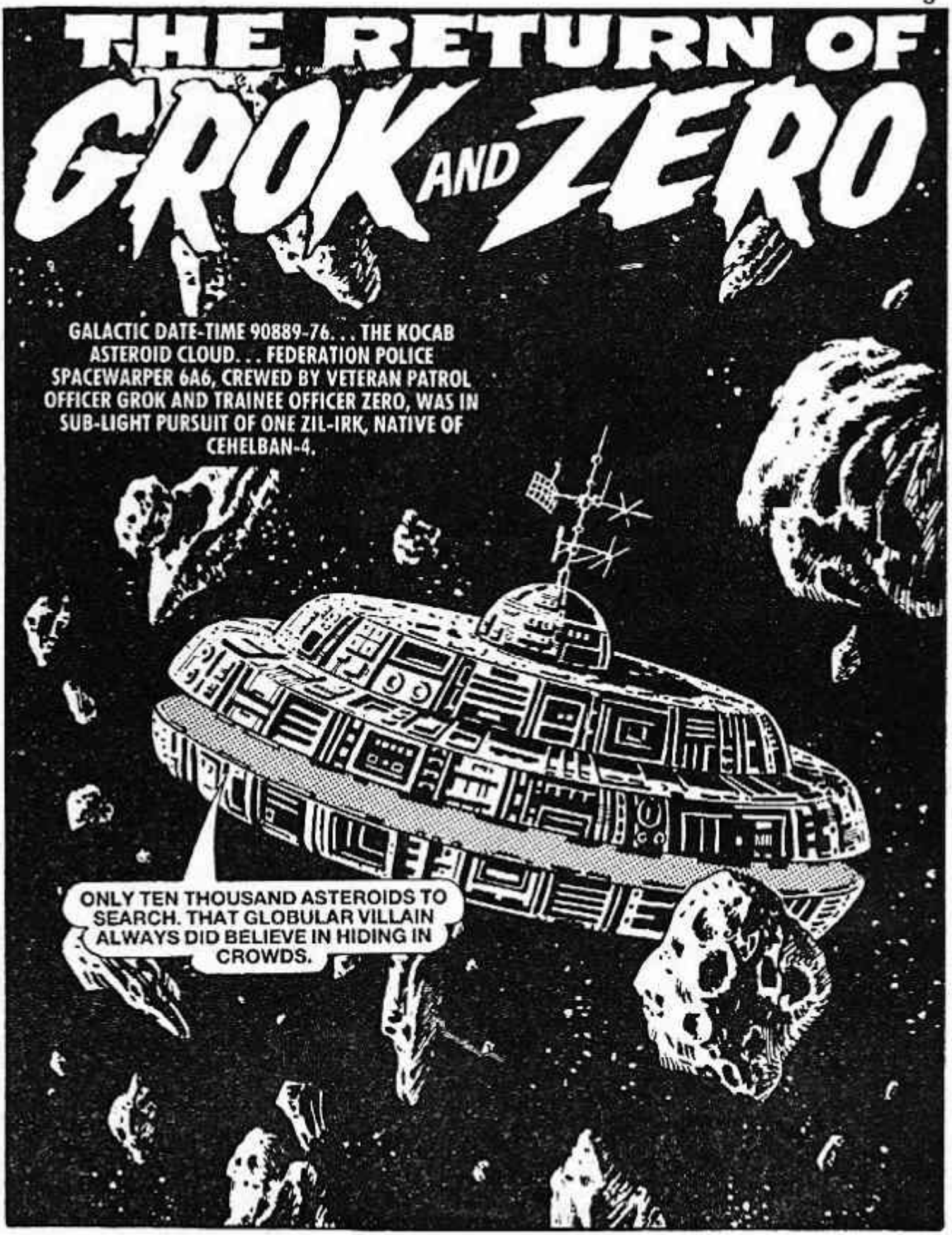
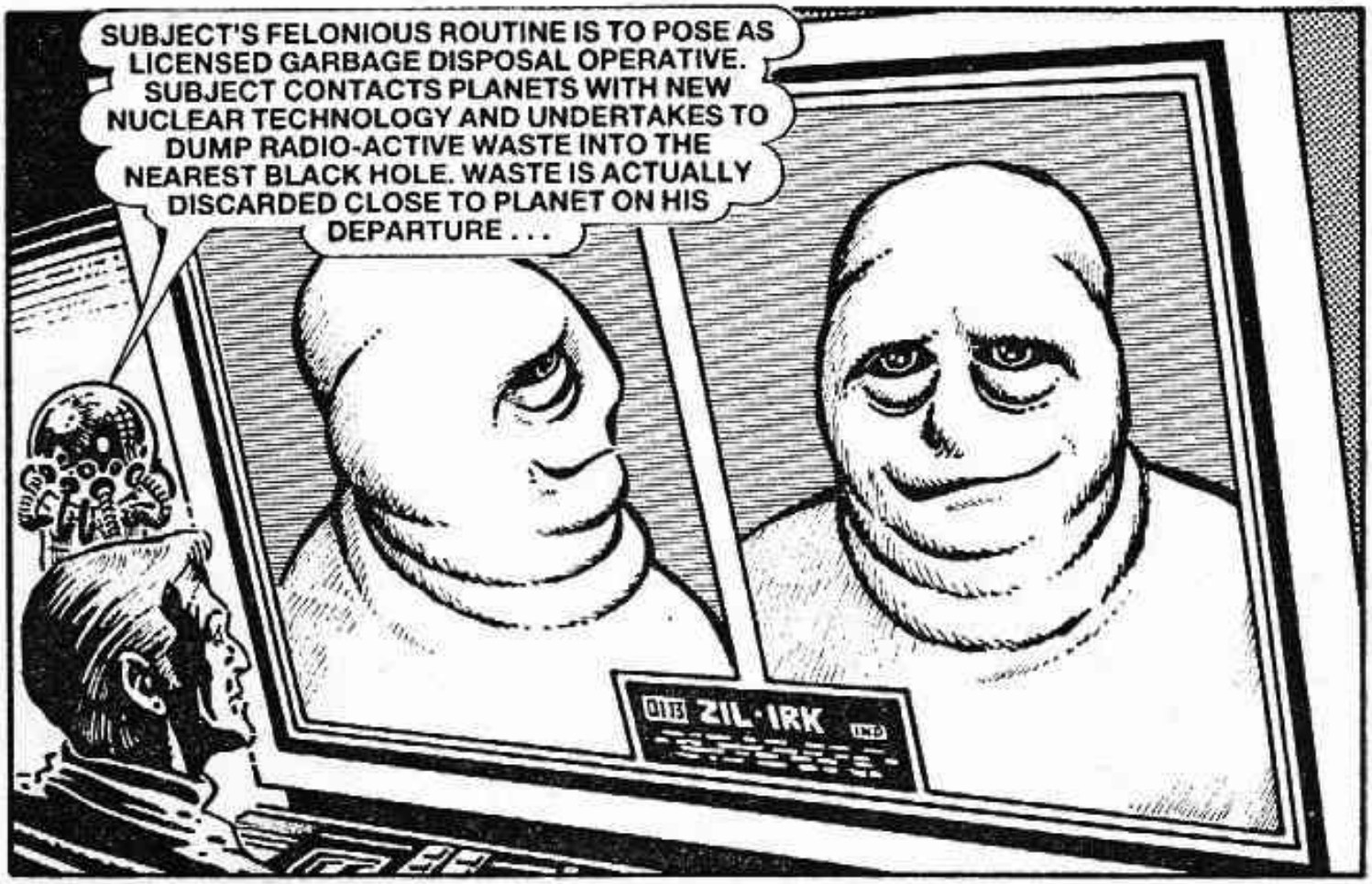
THE RETURN OF GROK AND ZERO

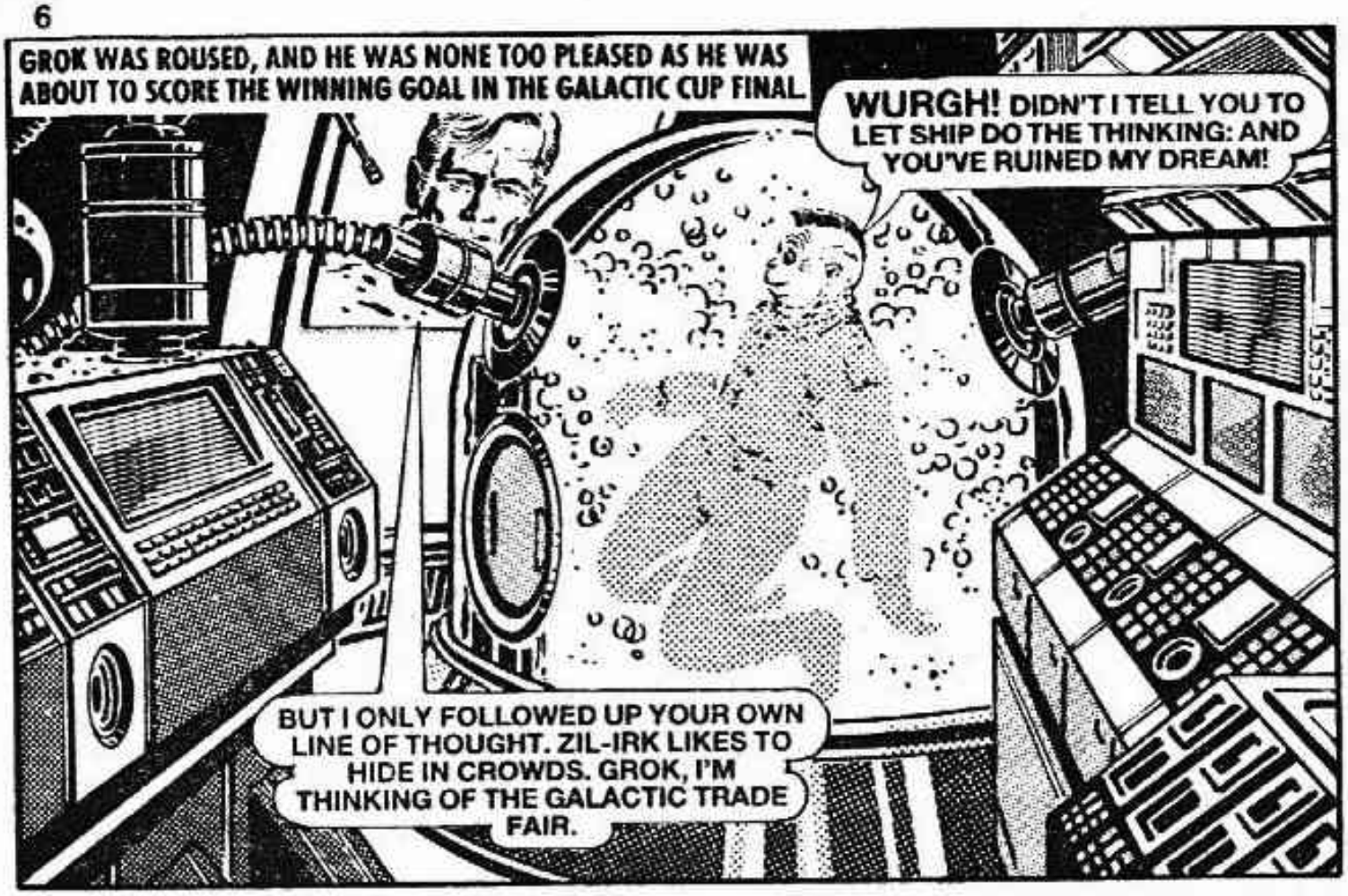


WURGH! I'M OFF FOR A REST PERIOD IN THE BLISS-POD. ZERO, TAKE OVER WATCH — AND LEAVE ANY THINKING TO SHIP — Y'KNOW, THE COMPUTER.

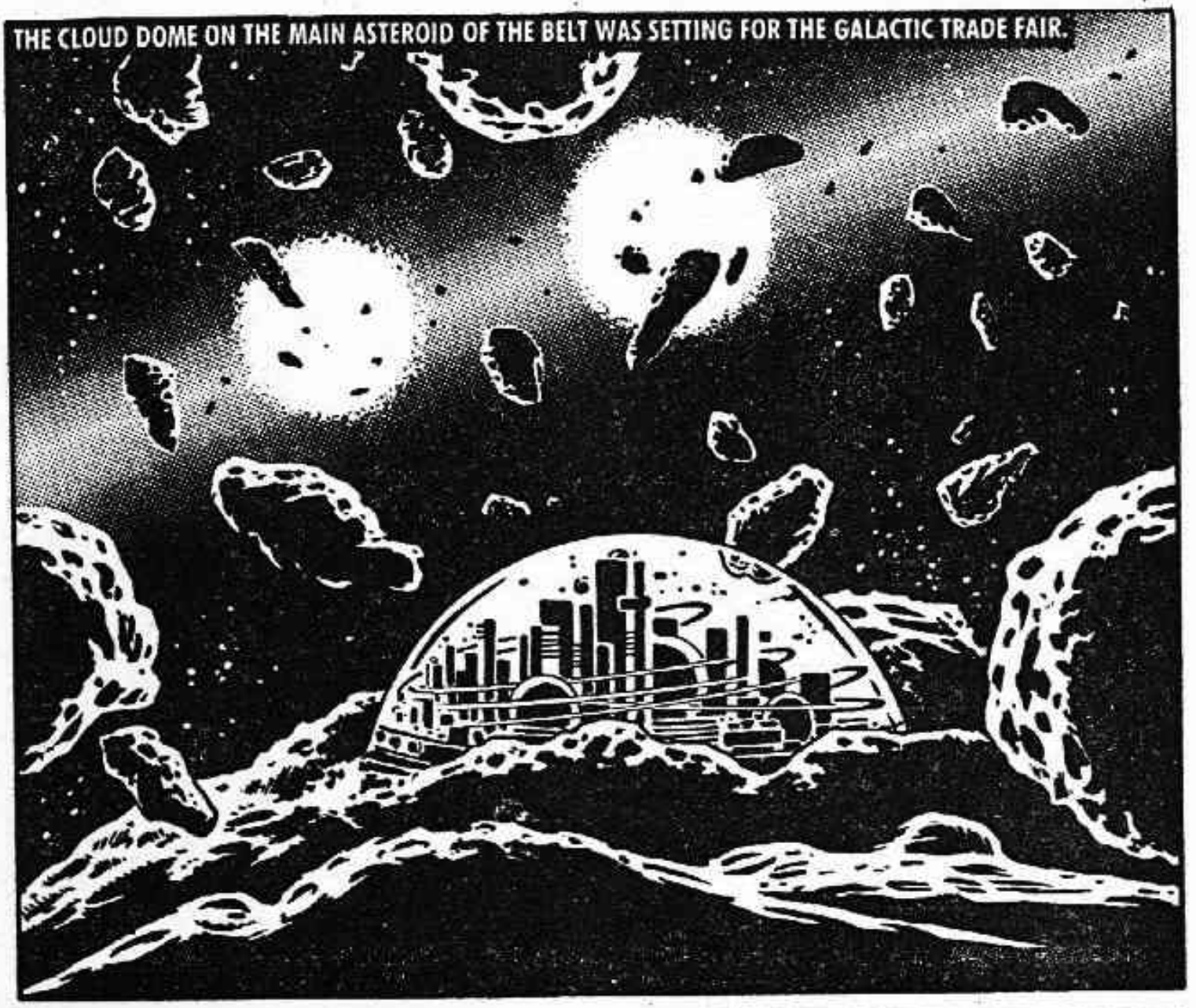
YOU HEARD, SHIP — I'M IN COMMAND. KINDLY GIVE ME ANOTHER RUN-DOWN ON SUSPECT ZIL-IRK.
IF YOU MUST, OFFICER ZERO. DATABASE IMAGE COMING ON SCREEN . . .

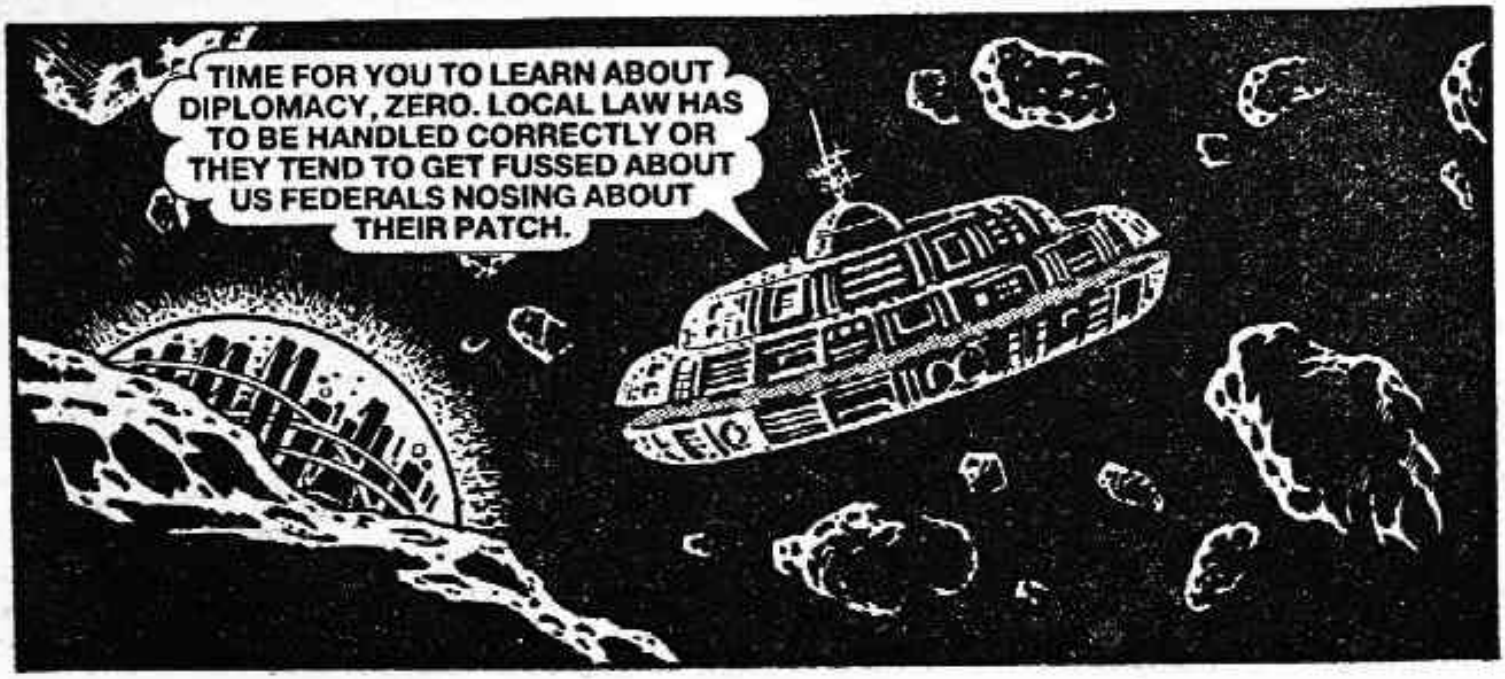

SUBJECT'S FELONIOUS ROUTINE IS TO POSE AS LICENSED GARBAGE DISPOSAL OPERATIVE. SUBJECT CONTACTS PLANETS WITH NEW NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY AND UNDERTAKES TO DUMP RADIO-ACTIVE WASTE INTO THE NEAREST BLACK HOLE. WASTE IS ACTUALLY DISCARDED CLOSE TO PLANET ON HIS DEPARTURE . . .
ZIL·IRK

HIS HOME PLANET IS A CROWDED PLACE! A WORLD SWARMING WITH GLOBULAR BEINGS. HUM, I WONDER . . .


GROK WAS ROUSED, AND HE WAS NONE TOO PLEASED AS HE WAS ABOUT TO SCORE THE WINNING GOAL IN THE GALACTIC CUP FINAL.
WURGH! DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO LET SHIP DO THE THINKING: AND YOU'VE RUINED MY DREAM!
BUT I ONLY FOLLOWED UP YOUR OWN LINE OF THOUGHT. ZIL-IRK LIKES TO HIDE IN CROWDS. GROK, I'M THINKING OF THE GALACTIC TRADE FAIR.

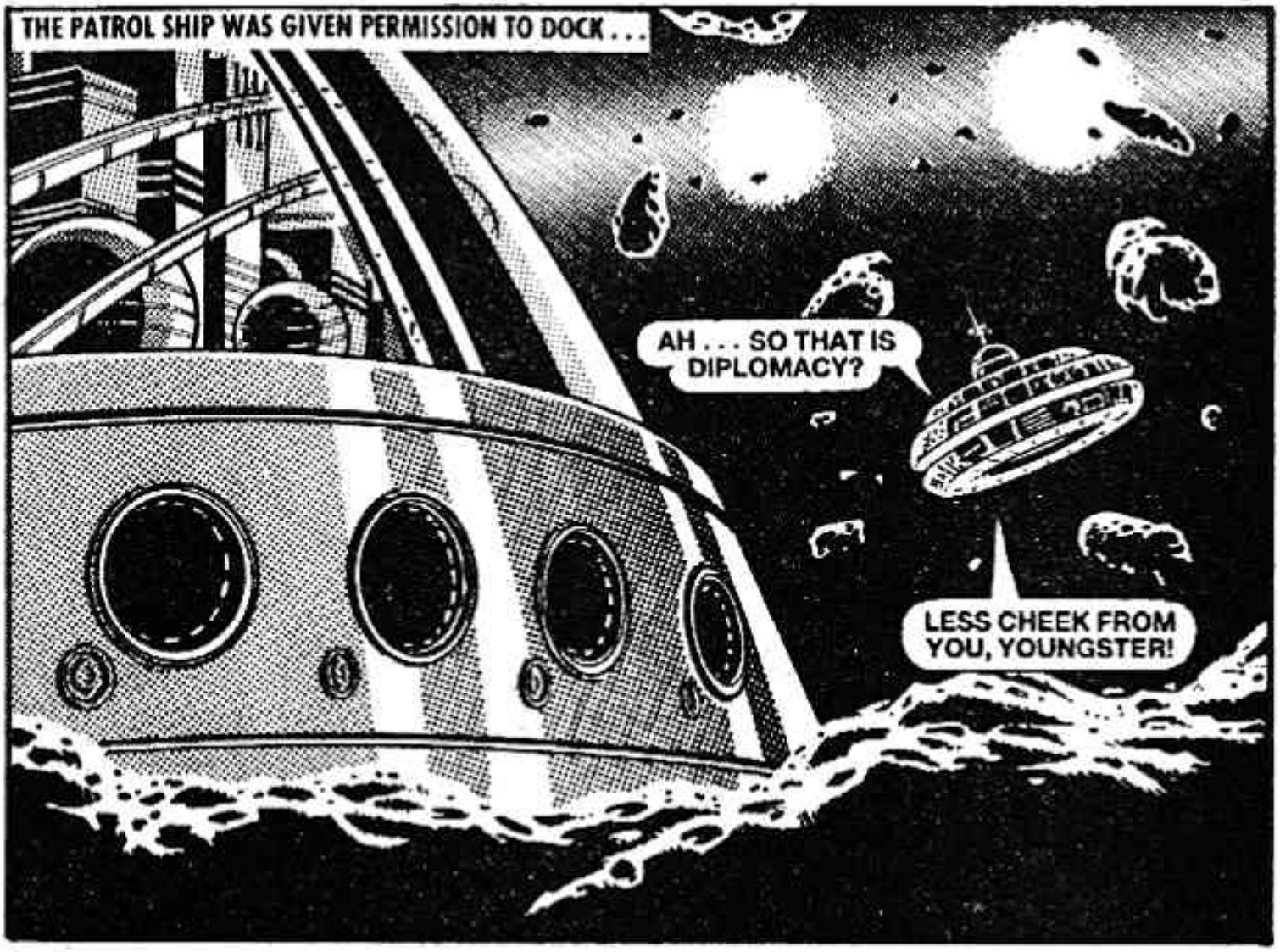
ZERO, YOU COULD AMAZE ME BY BEING RIGHT FOR ONCE. ANYWAY, IT'S WORTH A TRY IF ONLY TO GIVE US A BREAK FROM SPACE.

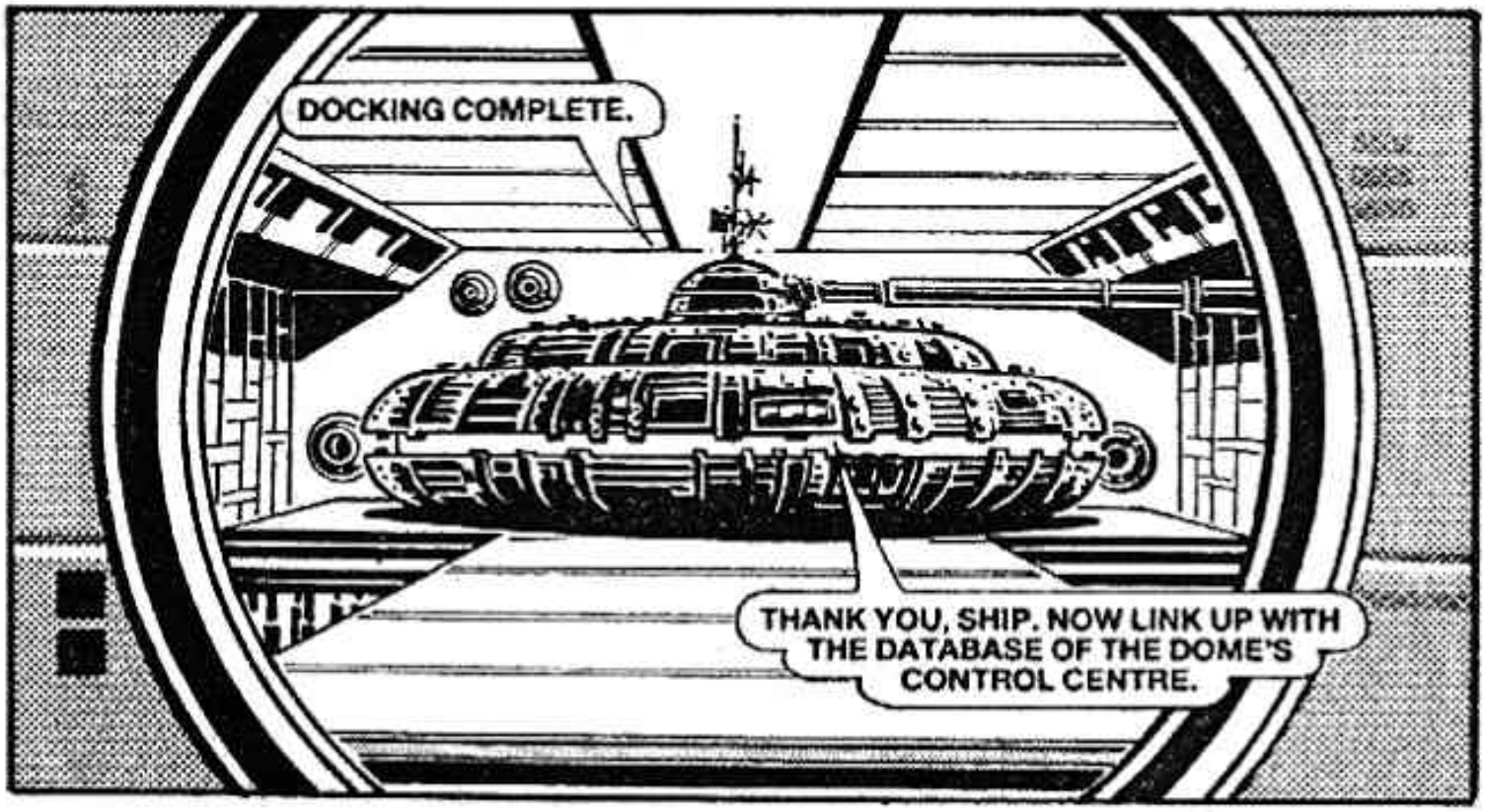

THE CLOUD DOME ON THE MAIN ASTEROID OF THE BELT WAS SETTING FOR THE GALACTIC TRADE FAIR.


TIME FOR YOU TO LEARN ABOUT DIPLOMACY, ZERO. LOCAL LAW HAS TO BE HANDLED CORRECTLY OR THEY TEND TO GET FUSSED ABOUT US FEDERALS NOSING ABOUT THEIR PATCH.

GROK RAISED THE LOCAL LAW —
OFFICER, MY LADS HAVE THEIR HANDS FULL WITH A MILLION VISITORS. THEY HAVE NO TIME TO BOTHER WITH A PETTY CROOK. YOU ARE REFUSED PERMISSION TO DOCK.
CHIEF NUNZ, I'M SURE YOU DON'T MEAN THAT. WHY NOT HAVE ANOTHER THINK ON THE MATTER? TAKE YOUR TIME.

TWO SECONDS LATER —
TIME UP, SLIMEBAG. LET MY CRAFT IN UNLESS YOU WANT ME TO INVOKE ANY ONE OF A DOZEN FEDERATION LAWS THAT WILL CLOSE YOUR CANOPIED ANTHEAP TO ALL TRAFFIC.


THE PATROL SHIP WAS GIVEN PERMISSION TO DOCK . . .
AH . . . SO THAT IS DIPLOMACY?
LESS CHEEK FROM YOU, YOUNGSTER!

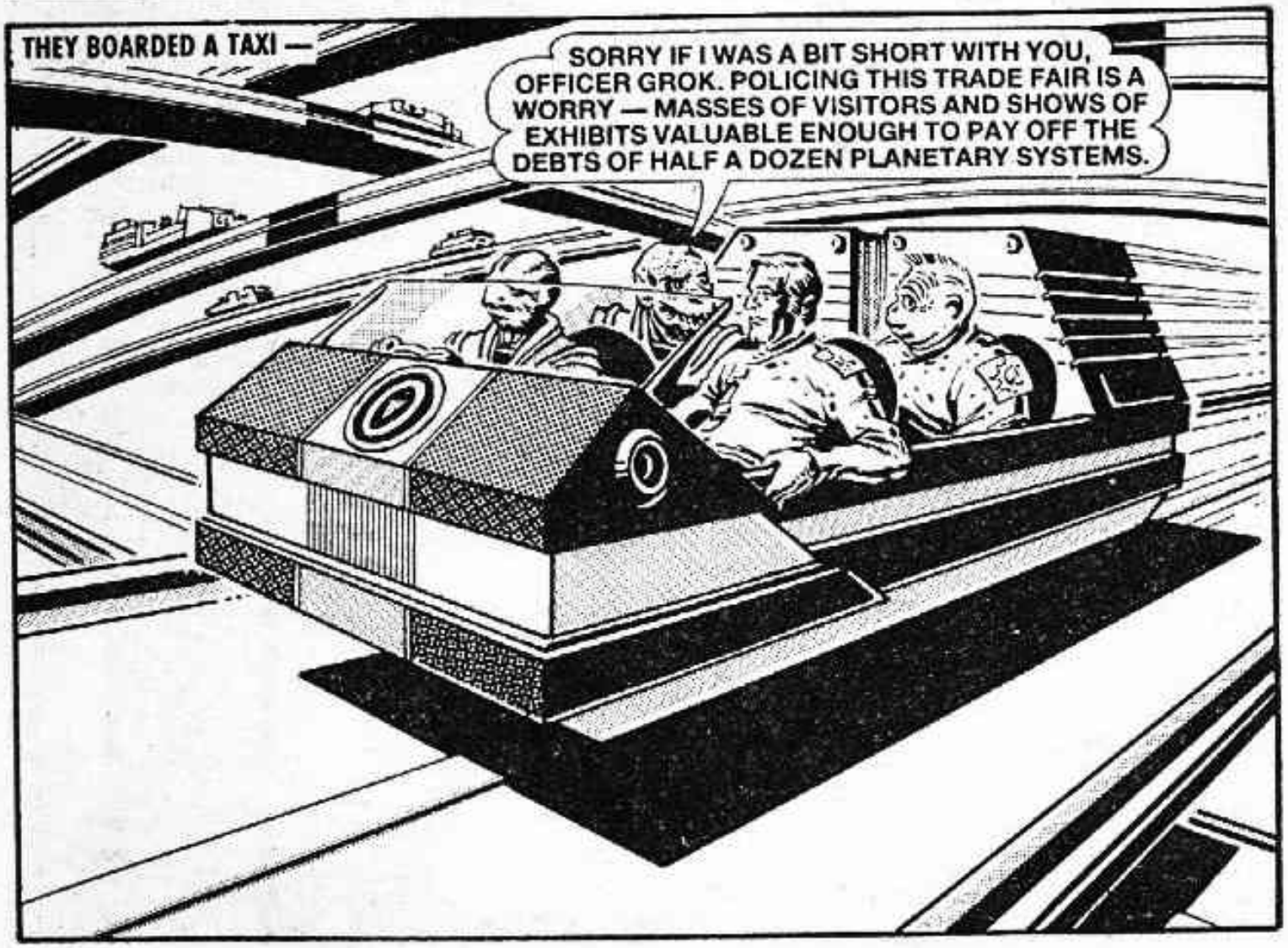

DOCKING COMPLETE.
THANK YOU, SHIP. NOW LINK UP WITH THE DATABASE OF THE DOME'S CONTROL CENTRE.

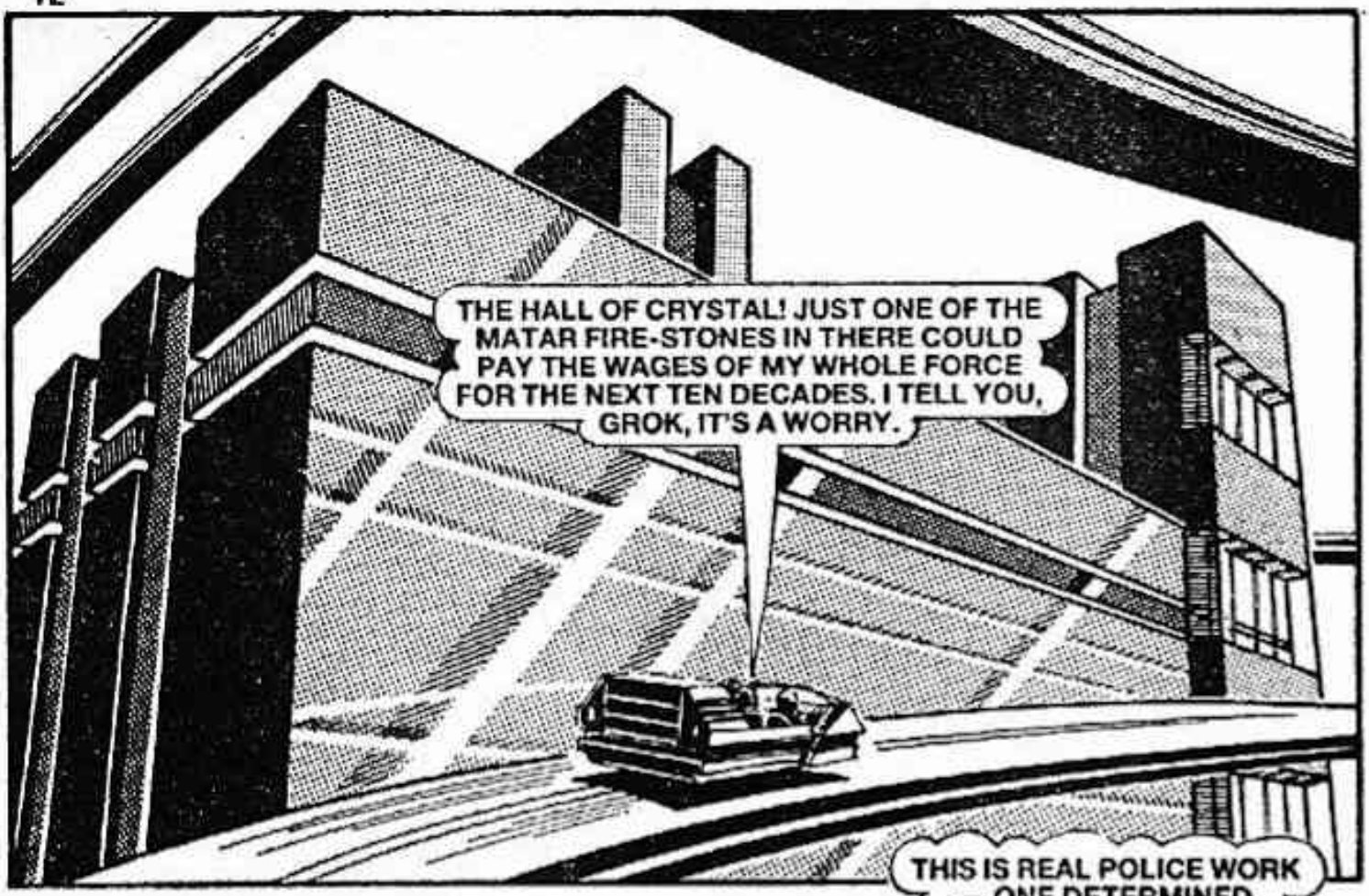
RECORD OF RECENT VISITORS. NO RECORD OF ARRIVAL OF SUSPECT'S SHIP.
ZIL-IRK'S TOO SMART FOR THAT. HE'D HIDE HIS CRAFT AND FLIP IN BY SHUTTLE. SHIP, SCAN ENTRY PERMITS!

STOP! THAT'S HIM. ZERO, YOU WERE RIGHT.
IDENTITY GIVEN AS ONE DORK-JIRKAL. . . FREELANCE SOCIOLOGIST FROM THE SOL SYSTEM. INFORMATION FALSE — PHYSICAL DATA A PRECISE MATCH WITH THAT OF ZIL-IRK.

CHIEF NUNZ AWAITS IN DISEMBARKATION.
COME ON, ZERO. REMEMBER WHAT I SAID ABOUT DIPLOMACY.

AH, MR GORK! CONTROL'S INFORMED ME OF YOUR MAN'S IDENTIFICATION. WE'VE LOCATED THE HOTEL WHERE HE IS REGISTERED.
ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS PICK HIM UP AND THEN WE CAN GET OUT OF YOUR HAIR, CHIEF BUNZ!


THEY BOARDED A TAXI —
SORRY IF I WAS A BIT SHORT WITH YOU, OFFICER GROK. POLICING THIS TRADE FAIR IS A WORRY — MASSES OF VISITORS AND SHOWS OF EXHIBITS VALUABLE ENOUGH TO PAY OFF THE DEBTS OF HALF A DOZEN PLANETARY SYSTEMS.


THE HALL OF CRYSTAL! JUST ONE OF THE MATAR FIRE-STONES IN THERE COULD PAY THE WAGES OF MY WHOLE FORCE FOR THE NEXT TEN DECADES. I TELL YOU, GROK, IT'S A WORRY.

THE HOV-TAXI STOPPED OUTSIDE THE HOTEL RESARF.
HOTEL
RESARF
JUST A MODEST HOTEL. YOUR MAN IS IN A GROUND FLOOR BACK ROOM.
HANDY FOR A QUICK EXIT, EH? ZERO, GO COVER THE REAR.

THIS IS REAL POLICE WORK — ONE DETERMINED OFFICER UP AGAINST A DANGEROUS CRIMINAL.

WHY WAIT WHEN I CAN GO IN. HUP!
OFFICER ZERO WENT IN — RIGHT IN!
HUH — WHAT . . .

MORNING, OFFICER. NOTHING WOULD TEMPT ME TO JUMP INTO A TANK OF ADHARA FIGHTING FISH.
ZERO EMERGED — RAPIDLY . . .
NO TIME FOR SWIMMING, ZERO. OUR MAN DID A FLIT IMMEDIATELY AFTER SIGNING IN.

WE'LL WATCH HIS SHUTTLE, BUT HE CAN ALWAYS GET OUT BY AIR-TAXI. THERE'S A GOOD SERVICE RUNNING VISITORS TRIPS OUTSIDE THE DOME.
CHIEF, THIS IS YOUR PATCH. WE'D BETTER WAIT ABOARD SHIP TILL YOUR PEOPLE COME UP WITH SOMETHING ON HIM.

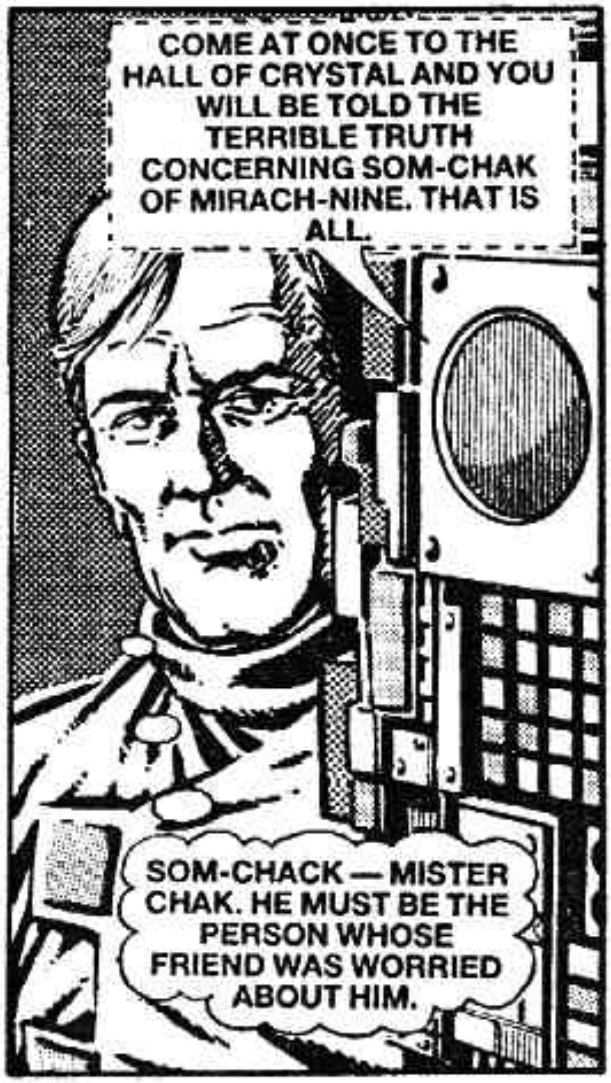
BACK AT THE SPACEPORT —
HELP!
I'LL KEEP IN TOUCH. . . OH, NO! NOT HIM AGAIN!

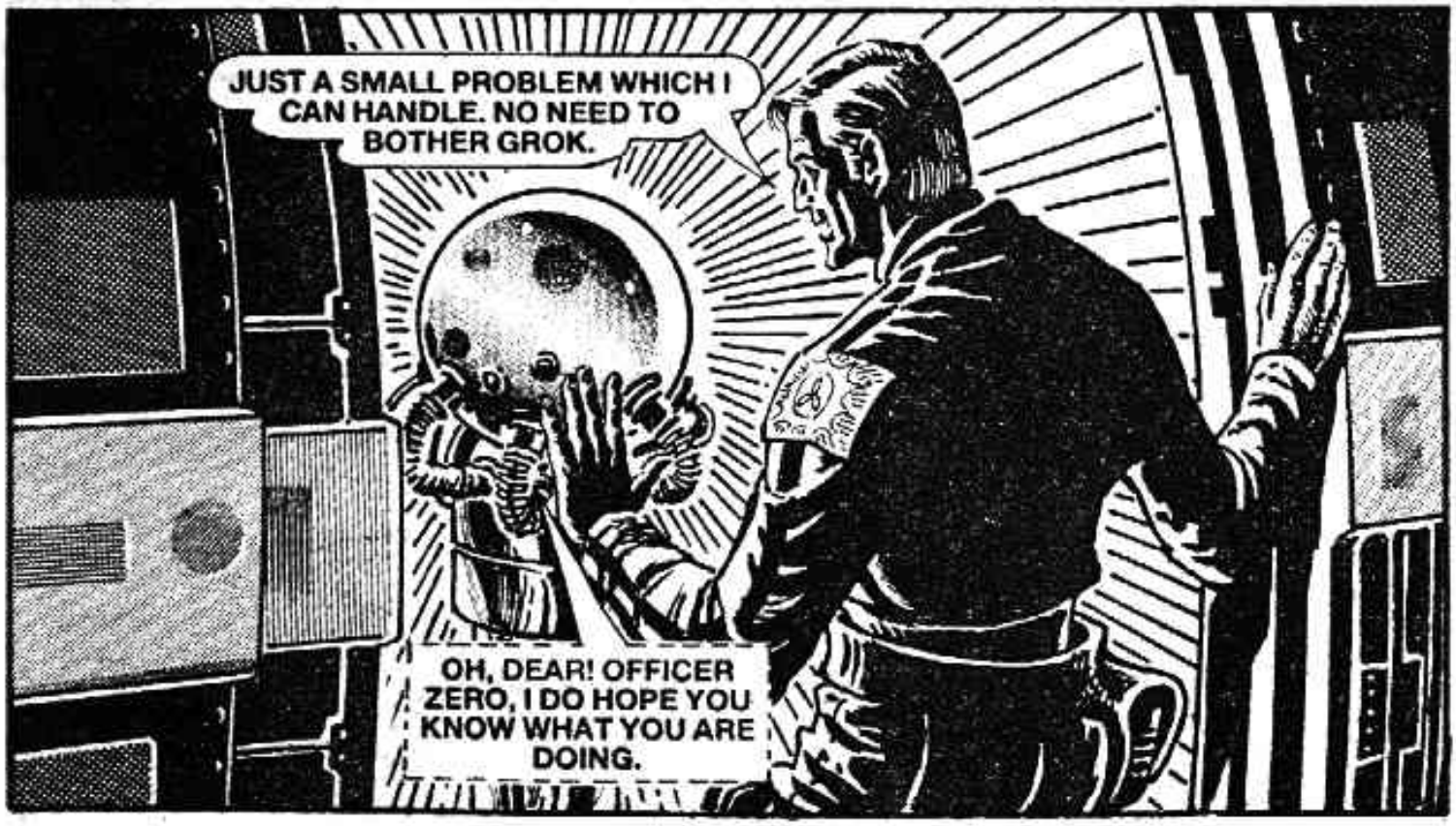
FEDERATION OFFICERS, I DEMAND YOU HELP FIND MY FRIEND, MISTER CHAK. HE IS MISSING, PERHAPS KIDNAPPED OR EVEN DEAD, AND THESE LOCAL POLICE WILL DO NOTHING.
NOW, SIR, NO NEED TO GO ON LIKE THIS. I ASSURE YOU THE MATTER IS RECEIVING OUR CLOSE ATTENTION.

GROK, WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR FEDERATION CITIZENS WHEN AWAY FROM THEIR HOME PLANET.
I KNOW THE MANUAL, ZERO, BUT I'M QUITE HAPPY TO LEAVE THE CASE WITH CHIEF NUNZ.

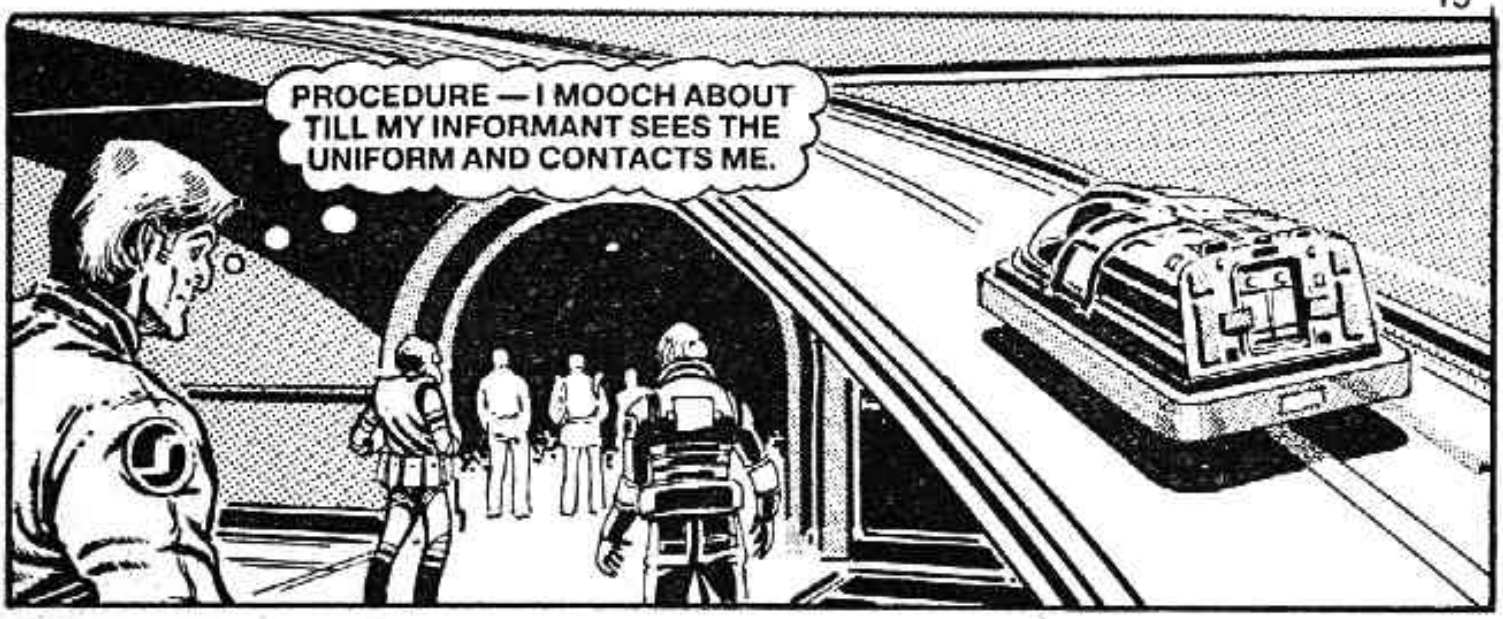
THEY BOARDED THEIR CRAFT AS THE MAN WAS LED AWAY.
GROK, MAY I TAKE OVER WATCH AGAIN?
WHY NOT? EVEN YOU SHOULDN'T RUN US INTO TROUBLE WHILE WE'RE DOCKED.

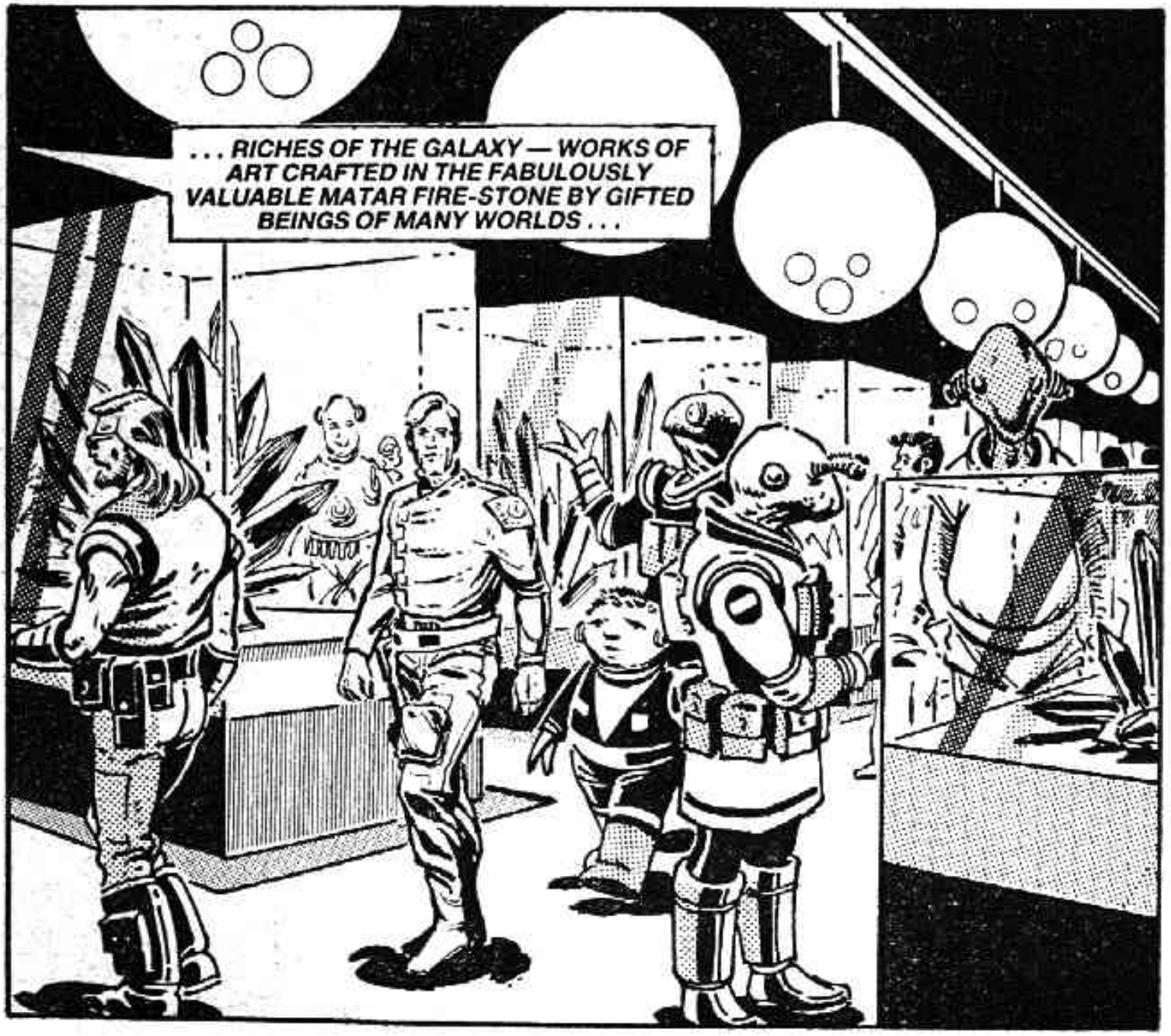
ZERO DRIED OUT . . .
HI, SHIP! ANYTHING TO REPORT?
ONE VOCAL TRANSMISSION WHICH I LACK THE DATA TO COMPREHEND. IT CAME FROM SOMEWHERE LOCAL AND ENDED BEFORE I COULD RUN A CHECK.


COME AT ONCE TO THE HALL OF CRYSTAL AND YOU WILL BE TOLD THE TERRIBLE TRUTH CONCERNING SOM-CHAK OF MIRACH-NINE. THAT IS ALL.
SOM-CHACK — MISTER CHAK. HE MUST BE THE PERSON WHOSE FRIEND WAS WORRIED ABOUT HIM.


JUST A SMALL PROBLEM WHICH I CAN HANDLE. NO NEED TO BOTHER GROK.
OH, DEAR! OFFICER ZERO, I DO HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING.

AS ZERO LEFT THE CRAFT.
REPORT FOR CHIEF NUNZ. ONE OF THE FEDS IS LEAVING — THE STUPID ONE!
ZERO TOOK A CAB . . .
YOUR ROBODRIVER WELCOMES YOU. ALL TYPES OF RECOGNISED CREDIT CARDS ARE ACCEPTED.
THE HALL OF CRYSTAL.
NOW IS MY CHANCE TO HANDLE A CASE ALL ON MY OWN. OLD GROK'S NOT A BAD FELLOW, BUT HE DOES RATHER CRAMP MY STYLE.

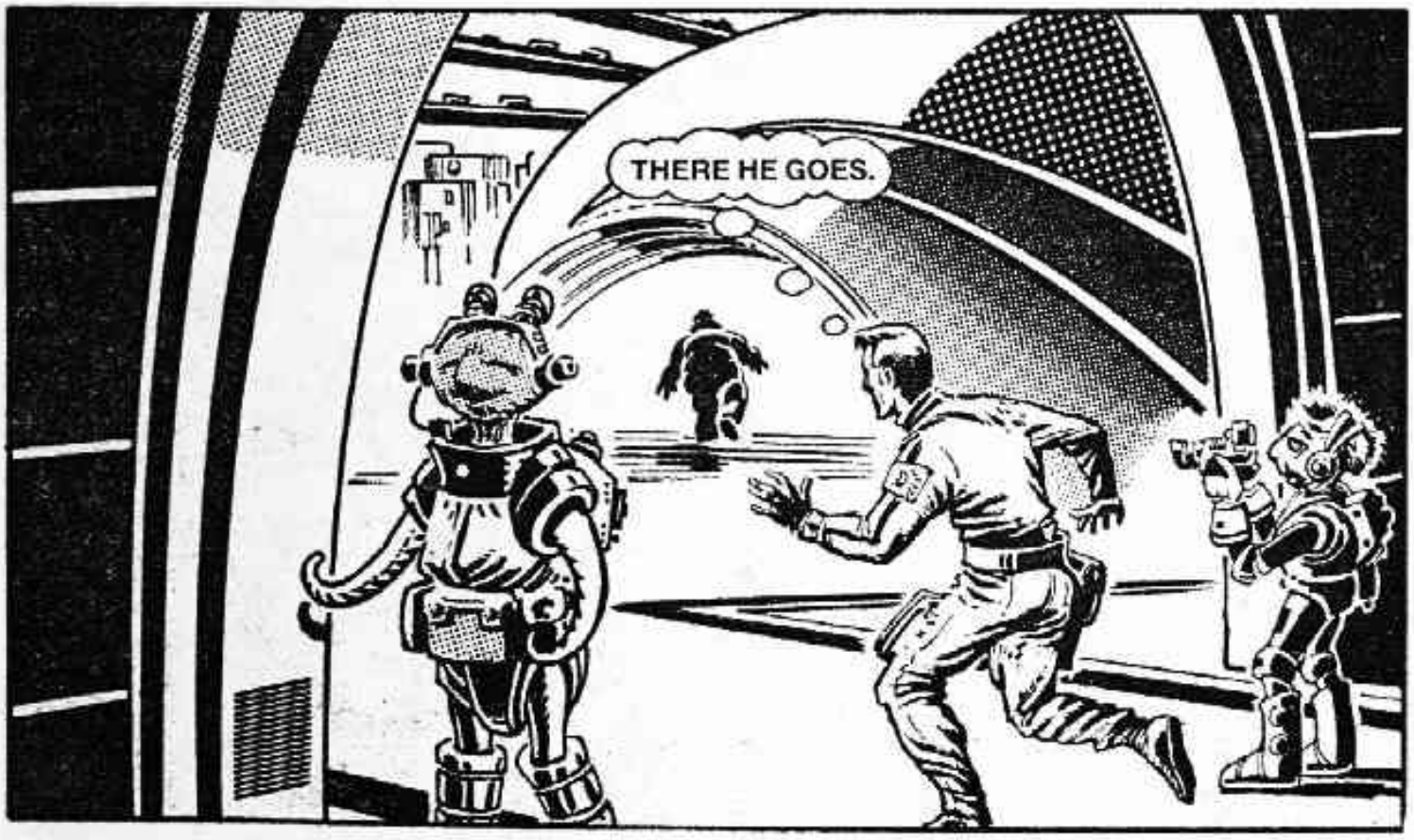

PROCEDURE — I MOOCH ABOUT TILL MY INFORMANT SEES THE UNIFORM AND CONTACTS ME.


. . . RICHES OF THE GALAXY — WORKS OF ART CRAFTED IN THE FABULOUSLY VALUABLE MATAR FIRE-STONE BY GIFTED BEINGS OF MANY WORLDS . . .

AS ZERO WANDERED AROUND AIMLESSLY, HE SPOTTED A FAMILIAR FIGURE.
IT'S HIM — THE SUSPECT ZIL-IRK, THE BLACK HOLE GARBAGE CONPERSON.
I'LL JUST CREEP UP AND GRAB HIM . . . MY FIRST PROPER ARREST.
OFFICER — PARDON ME!
NOT NOW, SIR. EXCUSE ME . . .

ZIL-IRK HAS SEEN ME! HE'S GETTING AWAY.
FULUBALUB!

HALT!
CORRECT — BE HALTED. RAPID MOTION IS NOT PERMITTED AMONG THESE VALUABLE EXHIBITS.


THERE HE GOES.

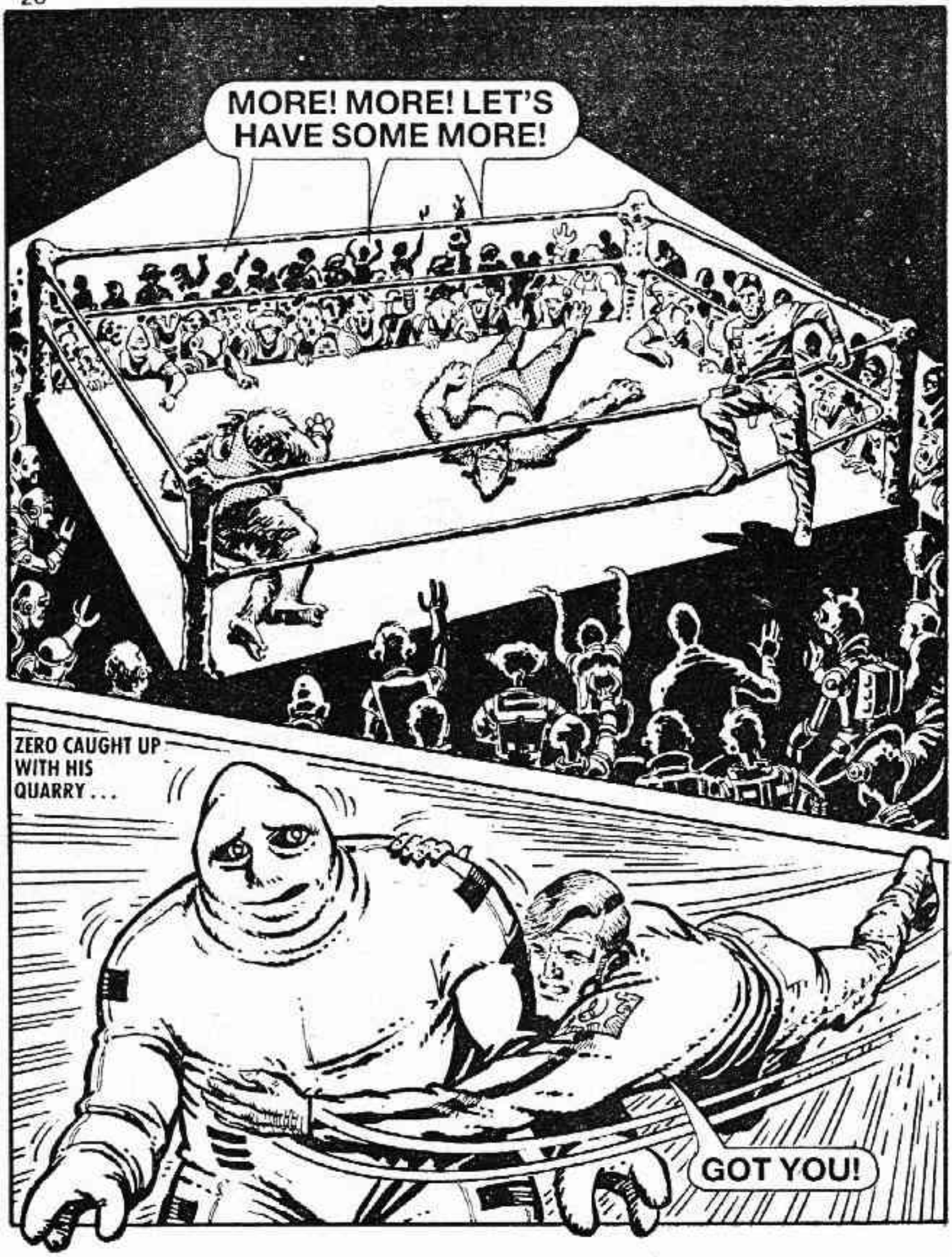
WELCOME TO SPORTDROME SIX. ENTRANCE A MERE TWO CREDITS. YOU ARE IN TIME TO WITNESS A FINE BOUT OF SUHAIL WRESTLING.
GROOOH!
BITE HIM
KILL!

THERE HE IS, OVER THERE!
THE PROMOTER'S SENT IN A CLOWN.
SO HE THINKS THIS BOUT NEEDS LIVENING UP, EH! WE'LL SHOW HIM.

SIR, YOU ARE INTERFERING WITH A FEDERATION OFFICER IN THE COURSE OF HIS DUTY.
THE ACADEMY DIDN'T TELL ME WHAT TO DO IN THIS PREDICAMENT, SO . . .
GOOD, ISN'T HE? COME ON, GRURKLE.

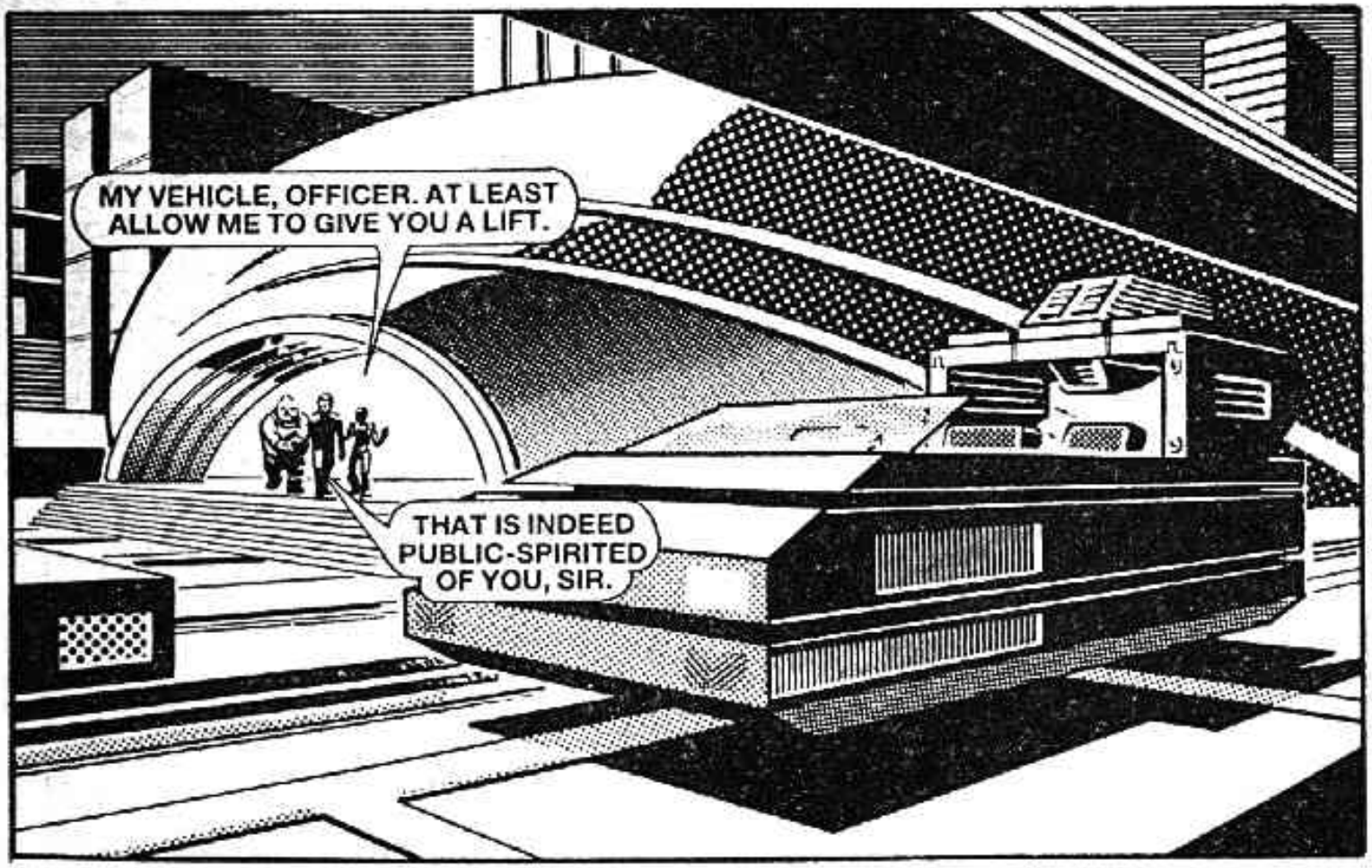
TSK! TSK! SUCH A ROUGH PAIR!

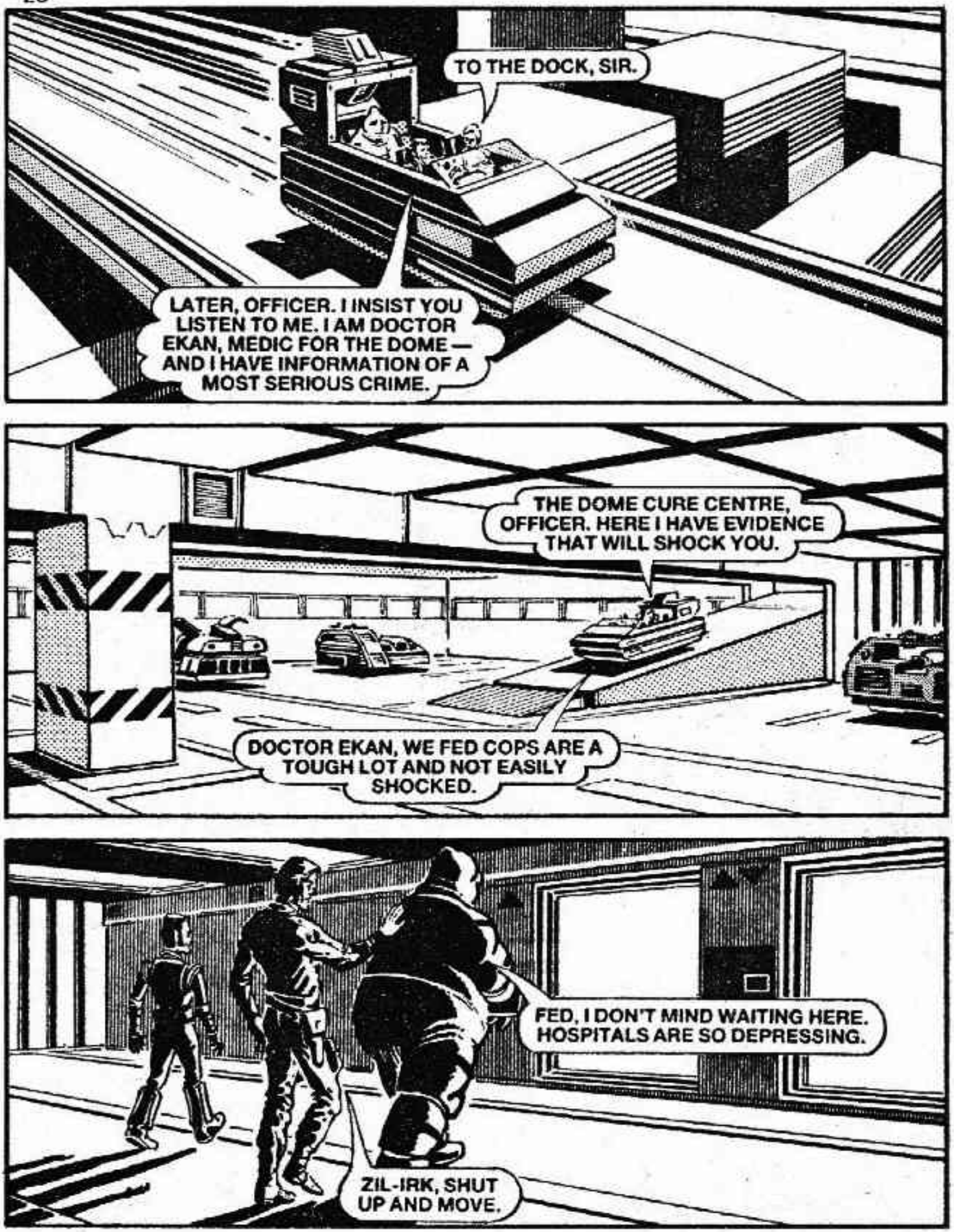
STARTLED, THE WRESTLER LET HIM GO, AND ZERO WHEELED HIM ROUND.
STAMP
KRUMP


MORE! MORE! LET'S HAVE SOME MORE!
ZERO CAUGHT UP WITH HIS QUARRY . . .
GOT YOU!

OFFICER, I MUST TALK TO YOU.
YOU AGAIN! YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT TILL I HAVE TAKEN IN MY PRISONER!

OFFICER, YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND. IT WAS I WHO SENT YOU THE MESSAGE ABOUT THE MISSING SOM-CHAK.
REALLY, SIR! I'M AFRAID YOU'LL STILL HAVE TO WAIT.

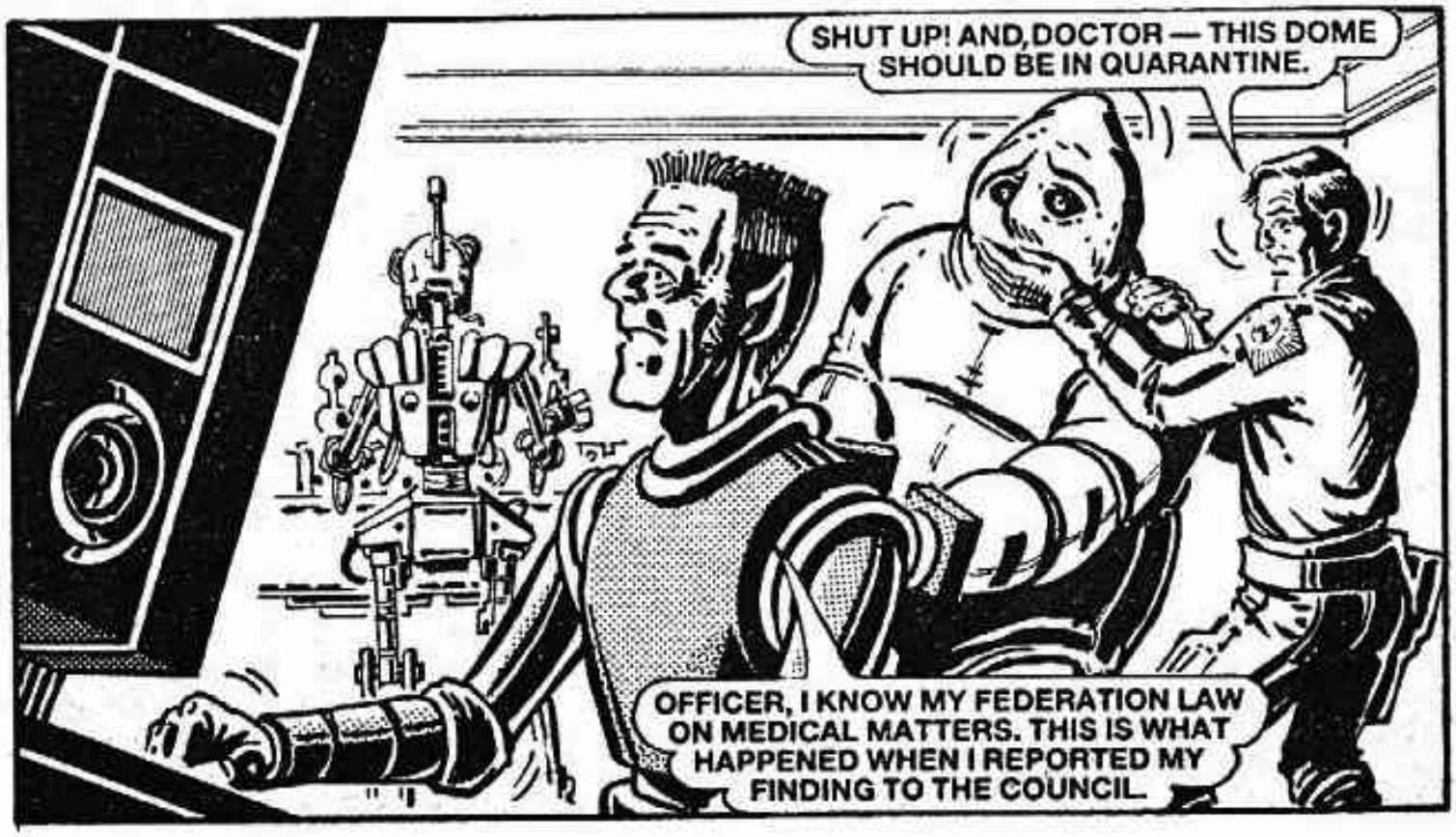

MY VEHICLE, OFFICER. AT LEAST ALLOW ME TO GIVE YOU A LIFT.
THAT IS INDEED PUBLIC-SPIRITED OF YOU, SIR.


TO THE DOCK, SIR.
LATER, OFFICER. I INSIST YOU LISTEN TO ME. I AM DOCTOR EKAN, MEDIC FOR THE DOME — AND I HAVE INFORMATION OF A MOST SERIOUS CRIME.
THE DOME CURE CENTRE, OFFICER. HERE I HAVE EVIDENCE THAT WILL SHOCK YOU.
DOCTOR EKAN, WE FED COPS ARE A TOUGH LOT AND NOT EASILY SHOCKED.
FED, I DON'T MIND WAITING HERE. HOSPITALS ARE SO DEPRESSING.
ZIL-IRK, SHUT UP AND MOVE.

ALL VISITORS UNDERGO A ROUTINE PHYSICAL SCAN ON ENTRY TO THE DOME, THE LASER-DISCS COMING TO MY STAFF FOR IN-DEPTH RESOLUTION — AND IT WAS A RECENT ONE OF THESE THAT STARTED THE ALARM BELLS RINGING.
AT LEVEL 42 ON THE GRAV-TUBE—
THE SCAN OF A MISTER SOM-CHAK OF MIRACH-NINE. ALLOW ME TO SHOW HIM TO YOU.

WE HAVE HIM CONFINED UNDER STASIS, BUT THAT MERELY HOLDS THE CONDITION. ONCE REVIVED, THERE WILL BE IN A SHORT WHILE, COMPLETE COLLAPSE OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM — THEN TERMINATION —
DOCTOR, WHAT CONDITION ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

THE ONE CONDITION THAT CAN AFFECT ALL LIVING BEINGS AND FOR WHICH THERE IS NO CURE. THE REGUL VIRUS.
OH NO — NOT THAT! LET ME OUT OF HERE!

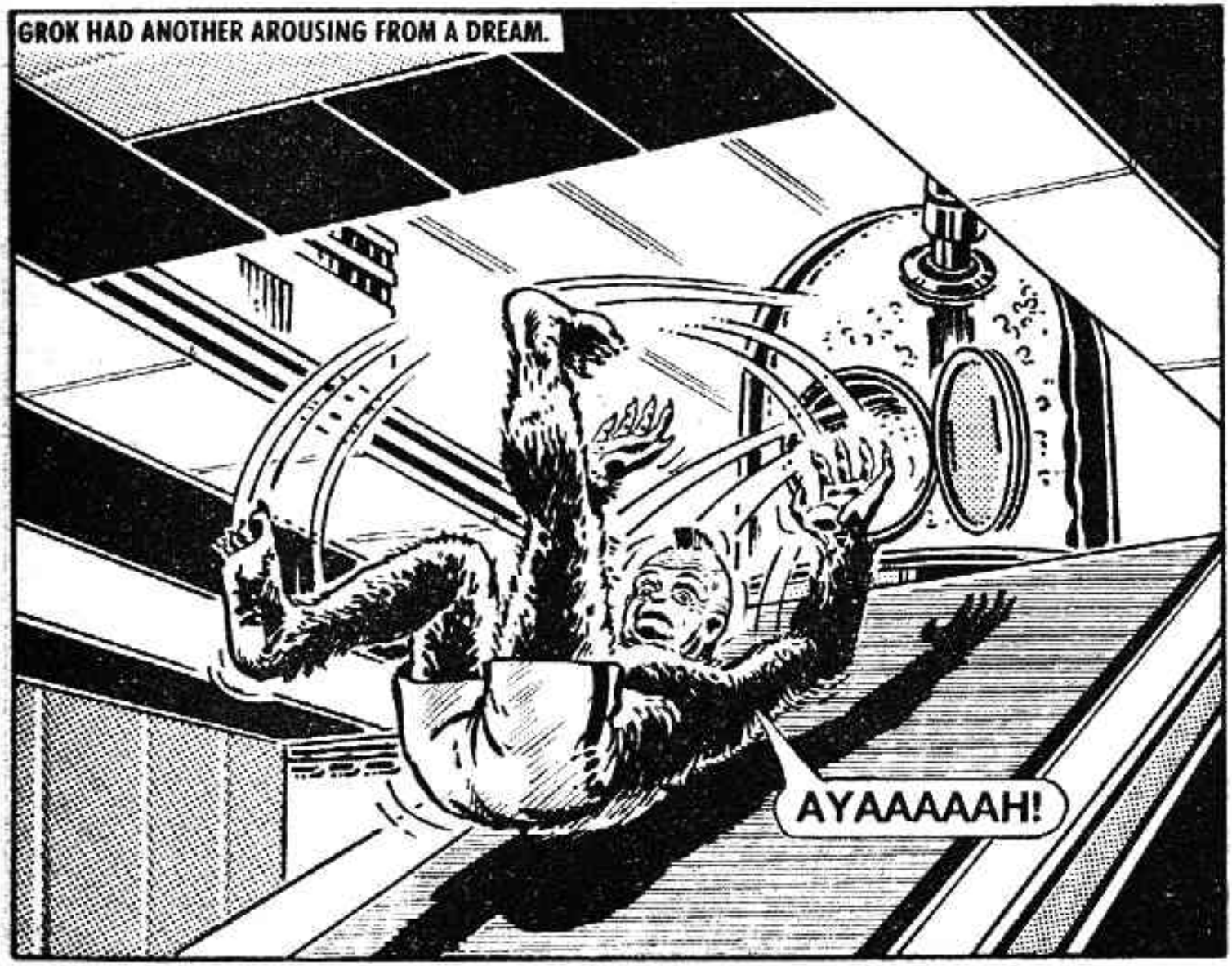

SHUT UP! AND, DOCTOR — THIS DOME SHOULD BE IN QUARANTINE.
OFFICER, I KNOW MY FEDERATION LAW ON MEDICAL MATTERS. THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I REPORTED MY FINDING TO THE COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN, THE DOME MUST BE SEALED AND A WARP-FLASH SIGNAL SENT TO THE NEAREST MEDCARE CRUISER.
DOCTOR EKAN, I AGREE. THIS IS WHAT MUST BE DONE — ER, EVENTUALLY. LET US TALK THIS OVER . . .

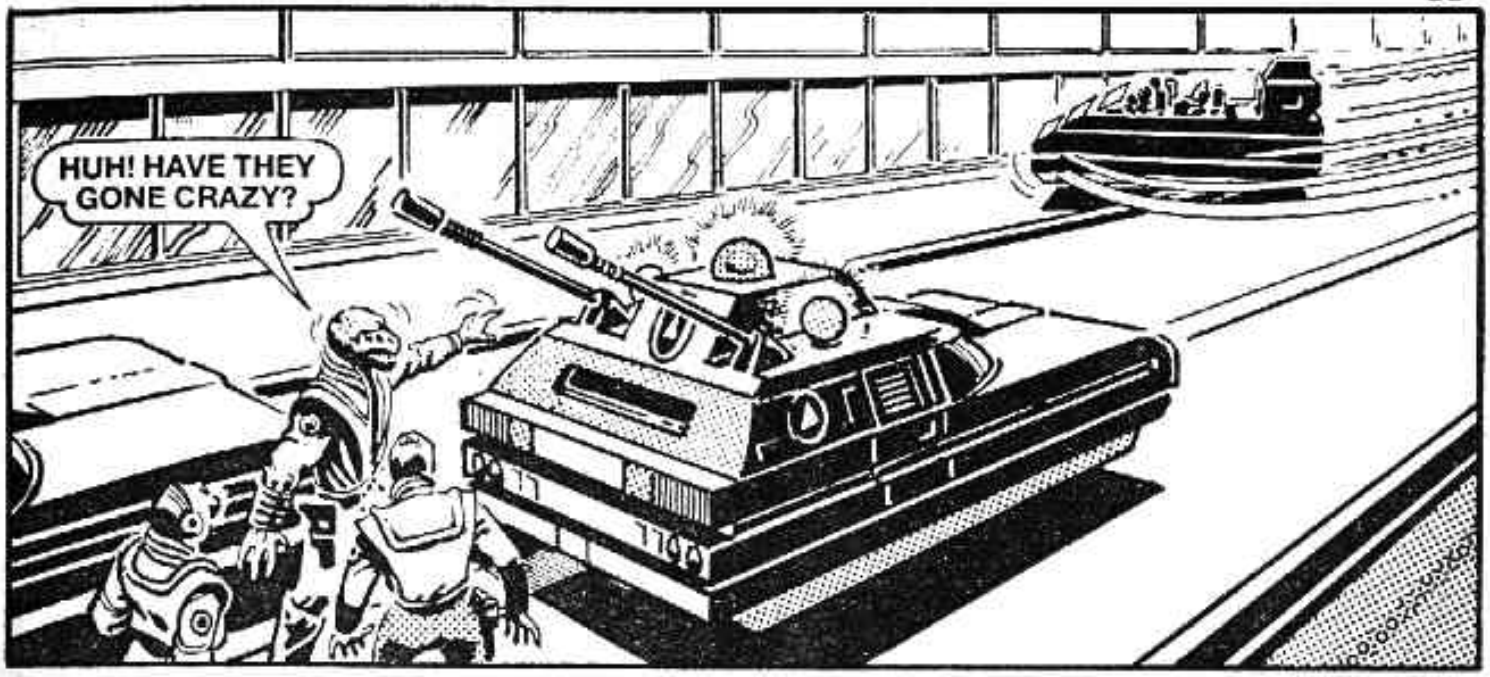
THE LAW MUST BE UPHELD, GENTLEMEN — YET THIS GALACTIC FAIR IS BRINGING GREAT BENEFIT TO OUR PEOPLE. MUST WE THROW IT ALL AWAY IN PANIC OVER ONE INSTANCE OF SICKNESS WHICH I AM SURE OUR FINE MEDICAL FACILITY IS CAPABLE OF HANDLING . . .

MY PERSONAL RECORDING, THE OFFICIAL MINUTES BEING DESTROYED AFTER THE MEETING VOTED TO IMPOSE COMPLETE SECRECY ON THE SITUATION. DO YOU WANT TO HEAR MORE?
I'VE HEARD ENOUGH. DOCTOR, THAT SIGNAL MUST BE SENT TO MEDCARE.
COME ON! WE'LL TRANSMIT OVER THE WARP-BEACON ON THE POLICE SHIP.
FURTHER FOR CHIEF NUNZ. PARTY IS NOW LEAVING CURE CENTRE.

SPECTRUM-ONE EMERGENCY, SHIP. BE ALERT FOR MY RETURN.
OH DEAR — ER, VERY WELL, OFFICER ZERO.


GROK HAD ANOTHER AROUSING FROM A DREAM.
AYAAAAAH!

SPECTRUM-ONE EMERGENCY HAS BEEN ORDERED BY OFFICER ZERO.
OH, NO! WHAT IS THAT BLOCKHEAD UP TO NOW?
TROUBLE APPEARED AHEAD OF ZERO'S PARTY . . .
DOME POLICE!
I SHALL DRIVE. THIS IS THE TIME FOR AN EXPERT TO TAKE OVER.


HUH! HAVE THEY GONE CRAZY?

KRASH!
I SAY . . . THIS IS PEDESTRIANS ONLY!

DOCTOR, YOU WOULD BE ABLE TO DIRECT ME BETTER IF YOU UNCOVERED YOUR EYES.
NIPPY LITTLE GADABOUT, DOCTOR. PITY IT ISN'T TUNED FOR REAL SPEED.
SMASHED! THE STATUE OF DAVIDODS — WORTH 170,000 OF ANYBODY'S CREDS.
BOK

THE SHIPDOCK! ALL OUT!
SKREECH!
WE'RE HERE — ARH, AND STILL ALIVE.
THE DOOR WON'T OPEN. DOME CONTROL MUST HAVE SEALED IT.
IT'S OKAY — I HAVE A KEY!
FRRT
ZERO USED HIS MESONLASER ON FULL BLAST . . .

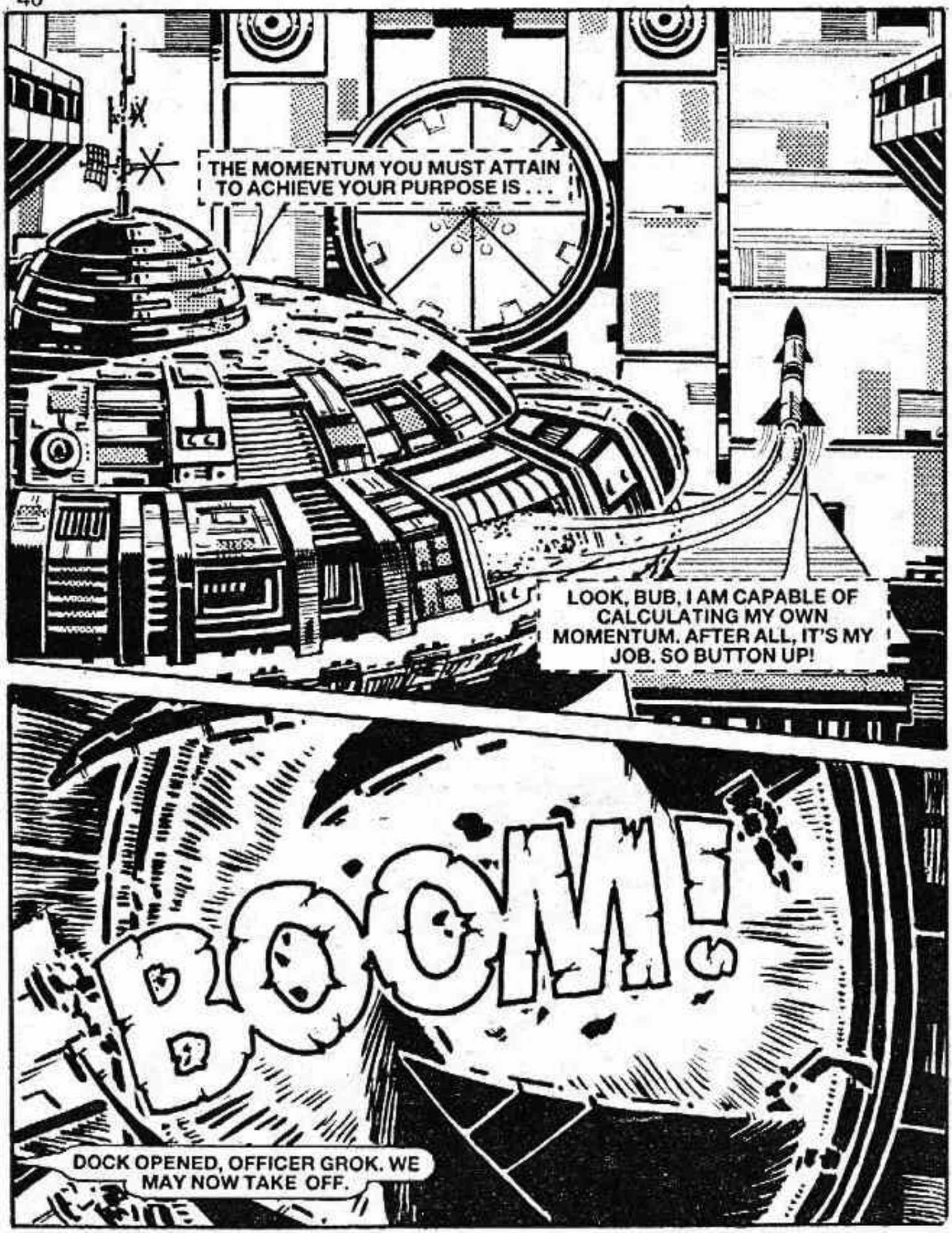
SOME KEY! BET YOU SPEND A FORTUNE ON DOORS.
HURRY! STRAIGHT ALONG THE ALLEY TO THE AIRLOCK HATCH.

ZERO'S PARTY ARRIVED ON BOARD THE PATROL SHIP . . .
GROK! JUST WAIT TILL YOU HEAR WHAT IS GOING ON.
I'VE JUST HEARD SOME OF IT FROM CHIEF NUNZ. HE CLAIMS YOU HAVE INFLICTED CONSIDERABLE CIVIC DAMAGE IN AIDING THE ESCAPE OF DOCTOR EKAN, WANTED ON SERIOUS CHARGES OF MEDICAL MALPRACTICE.

GROK HEARD ZERO'S REPORT . . .
FASCINATING! SHIP, CALL UP CHIEF NUNZ.
HE WAITS ON AN OPEN BEAM.

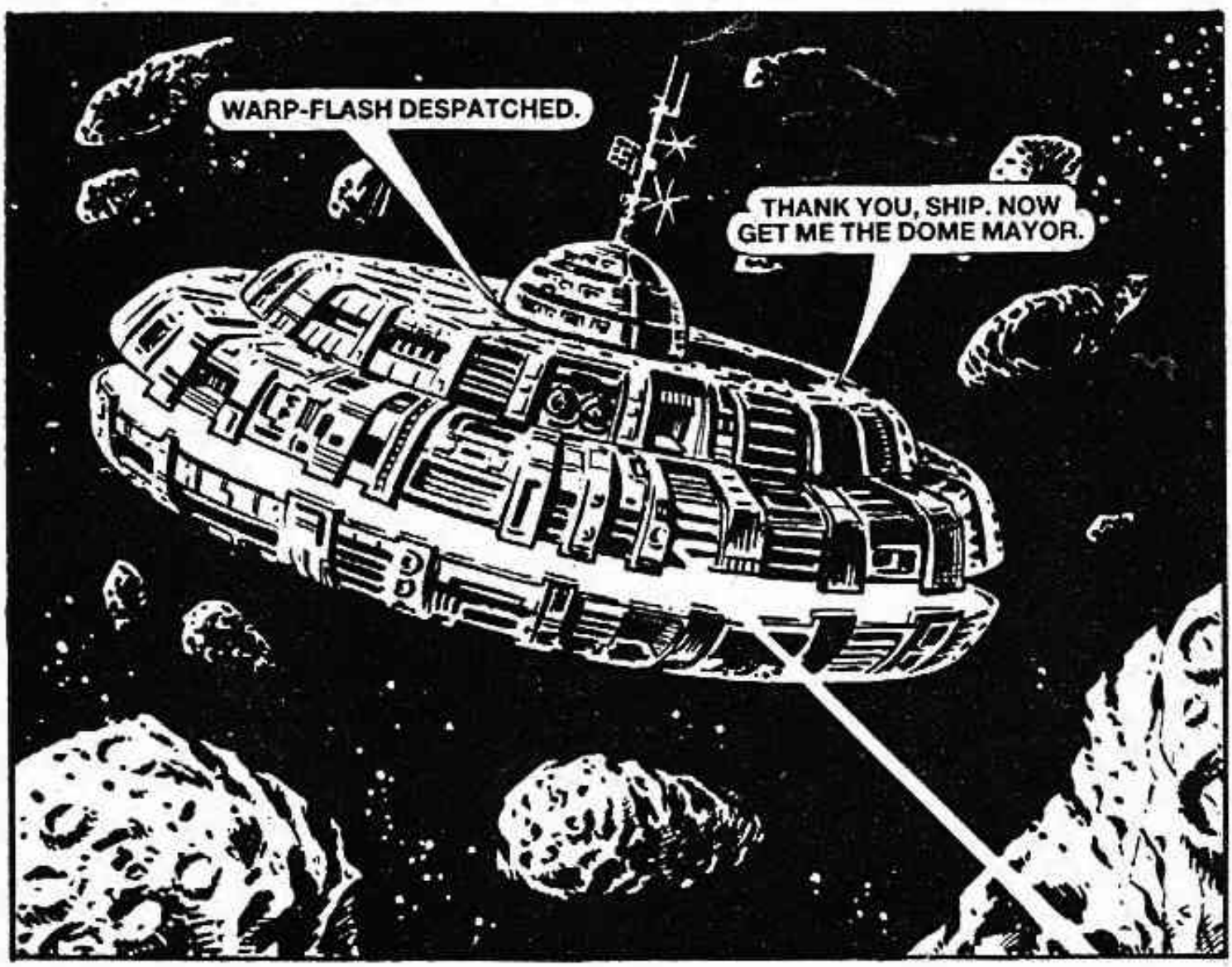
I NEED TO TAKE OFF IN ORDER TO USE MY SHIP'S WARP-BEACON. I REQUEST THIS DOCK BE OPENED.
OFFICER GROK, MY REGRETS, BUT A FAULT IN DOME CONTROL PREVENTS SUCH OPENING JUST AT THIS MOMENT.

OH, DASH! SHIP . . . ARM OUTER MISSILE TUBE WITH A LOW-CHARGE PRACTICE HEAD — OH, AND FIRE IT!


THE MOMENTUM YOU MUST ATTAIN TO ACHIEVE YOUR PURPOSE IS . . .
LOOK, BUB, I AM CAPABLE OF CALCULATING MY OWN MOMENTUM. AFTER ALL, IT'S MY JOB. SO BUTTON UP!
BOOM!
DOCK OPENED, OFFICER GROK. WE MAY NOW TAKE OFF.

SHIP, CO-ORDINATE THE WARP-BEACON FOR THE FREQUENCY OF QUADRANT MEDCARE — THAT'S WHERE WE'RE GOING!

THIS ELECTRON CHIP MAY SAVE YOU TIME, OFFICER. IT CONTAINS MY REPORT AND THE WARP-FREQUENCY OF A MEDCARE CRUISER ON INSPECTION IN THIS AREA.
THAT'S FINE, DOCTOR. LET SHIP HAVE IT.

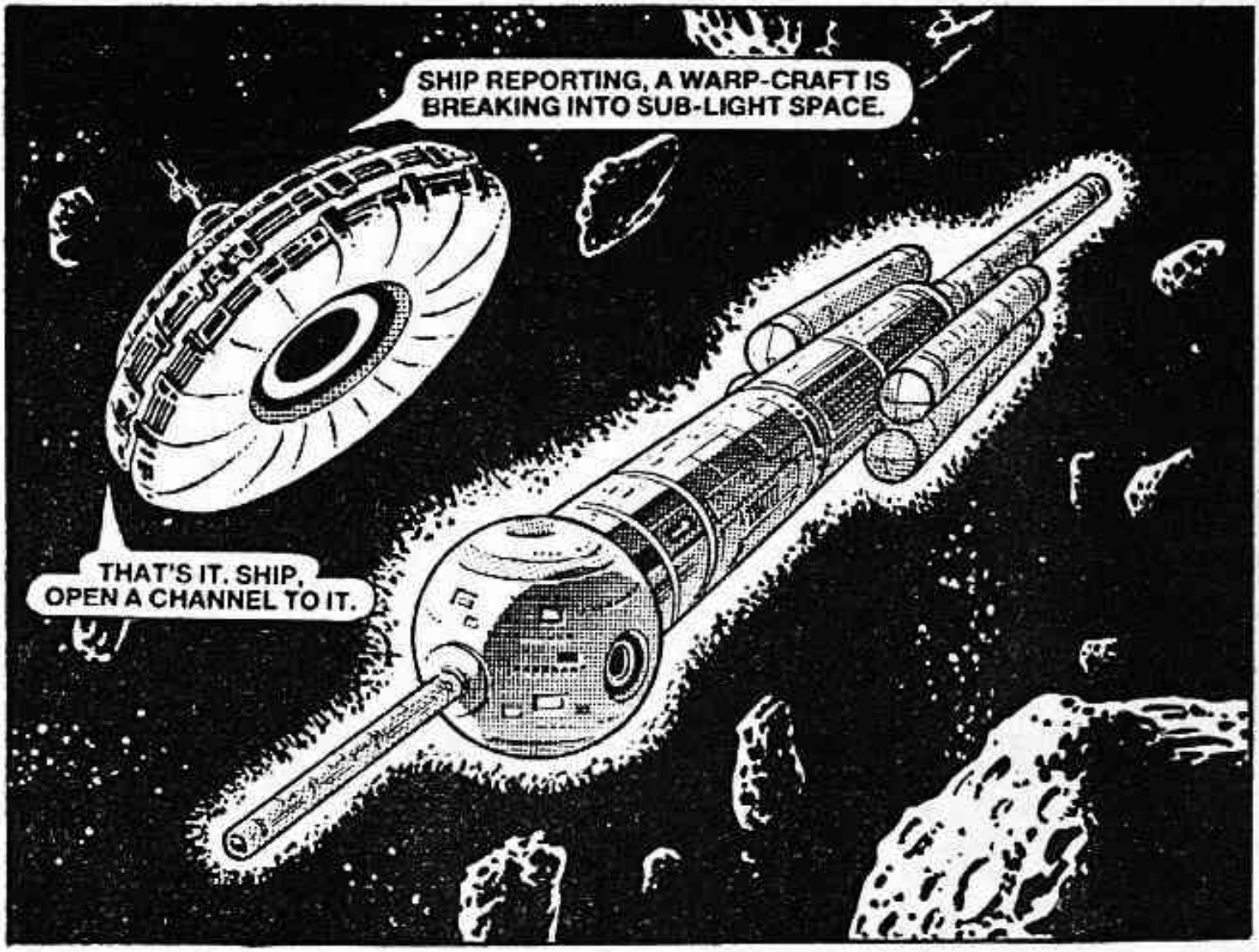

WARP-FLASH DESPATCHED.
THANK YOU, SHIP. NOW GET ME THE DOME MAYOR.

MISTER MAYOR, DETAILS OF YOUR SITUATION HAVE BEEN SENT TO MEDCARE. FROM NOW ON EITHER YOU CO-OPERATE OR YOU'LL BE CLOSED DOWN FOR GOOD.
OFFICER, I DO APOLOGISE FOR ANY MISUNDERSTANDING. BE ASSURED THAT CLOUD DOME IS NOW AT YOUR DISPOSAL.

ZERO, TIDY THE CRAFT WHILE WE WAIT. YOU CAN START BY GETTING THAT GLOBULAR VILLAIN OFF THE FLIGHT-DECK.
AT ONCE, GROK.

YOU'LL BE COSY, ZIL-IRK. WE RUN A NICE LINE IN HOLDING CELLS.
FED, YOU AREN'T FOOLING ME. REGUL VIRUS IN THAT DOME MEANS WE'RE ALL BOOKED FOR A NASTY TERMINATION.

TWO STANDARD DAY PERIODS LATER, WHEN ZERO HAD THE WATCH . . .
RESPONSE TO SIGNAL. THE MEDCARE CRUISER IS HEADING HERE ON WARP.
WHICH MEANS IT SHOULD ARRIVE CLOSE ON THE HEELS OF ITS TRANSMISSION.

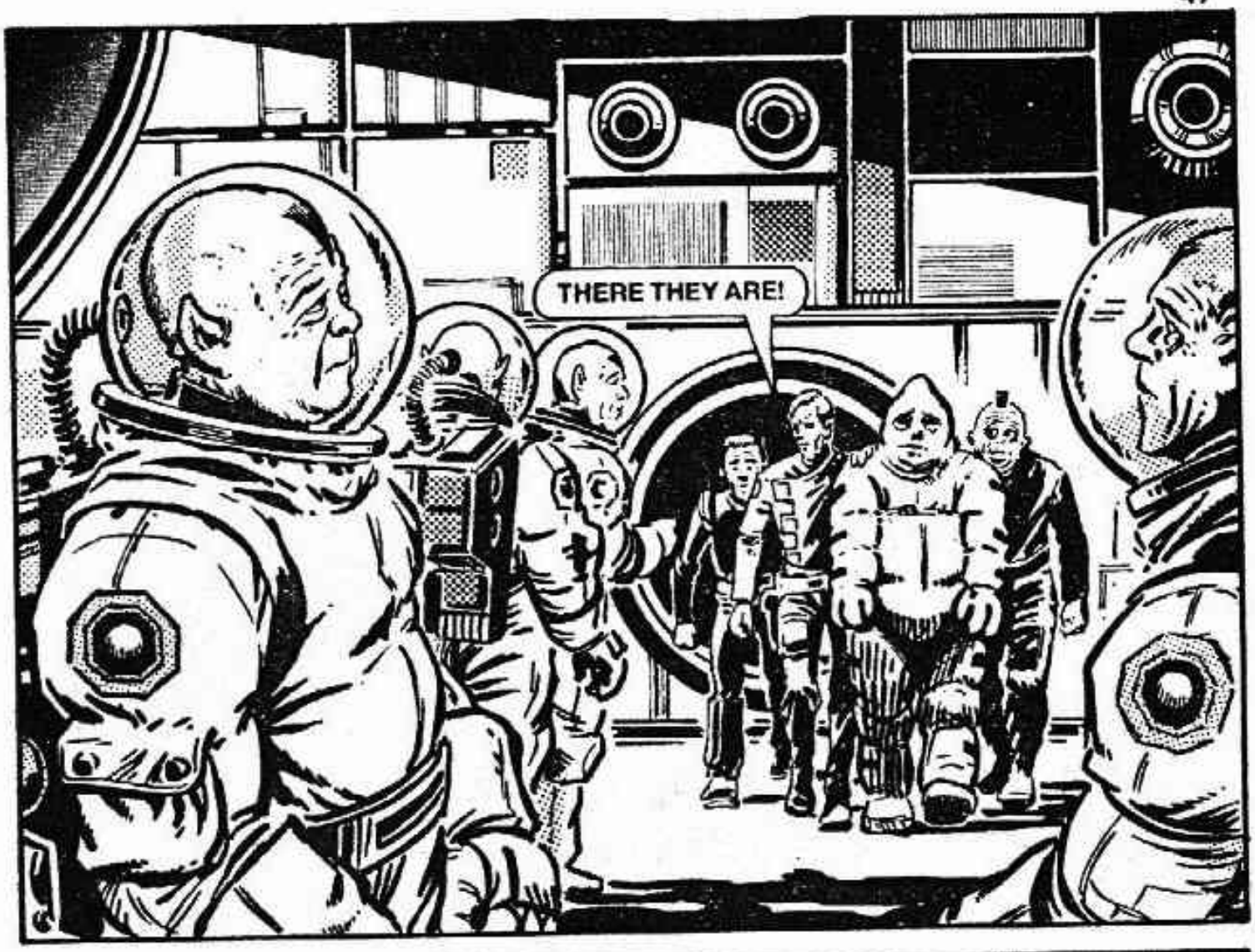

SHIP REPORTING, A WARP-CRAFT IS BREAKING INTO SUB-LIGHT SPACE.
THAT'S IT. SHIP, OPEN A CHANNEL TO IT.

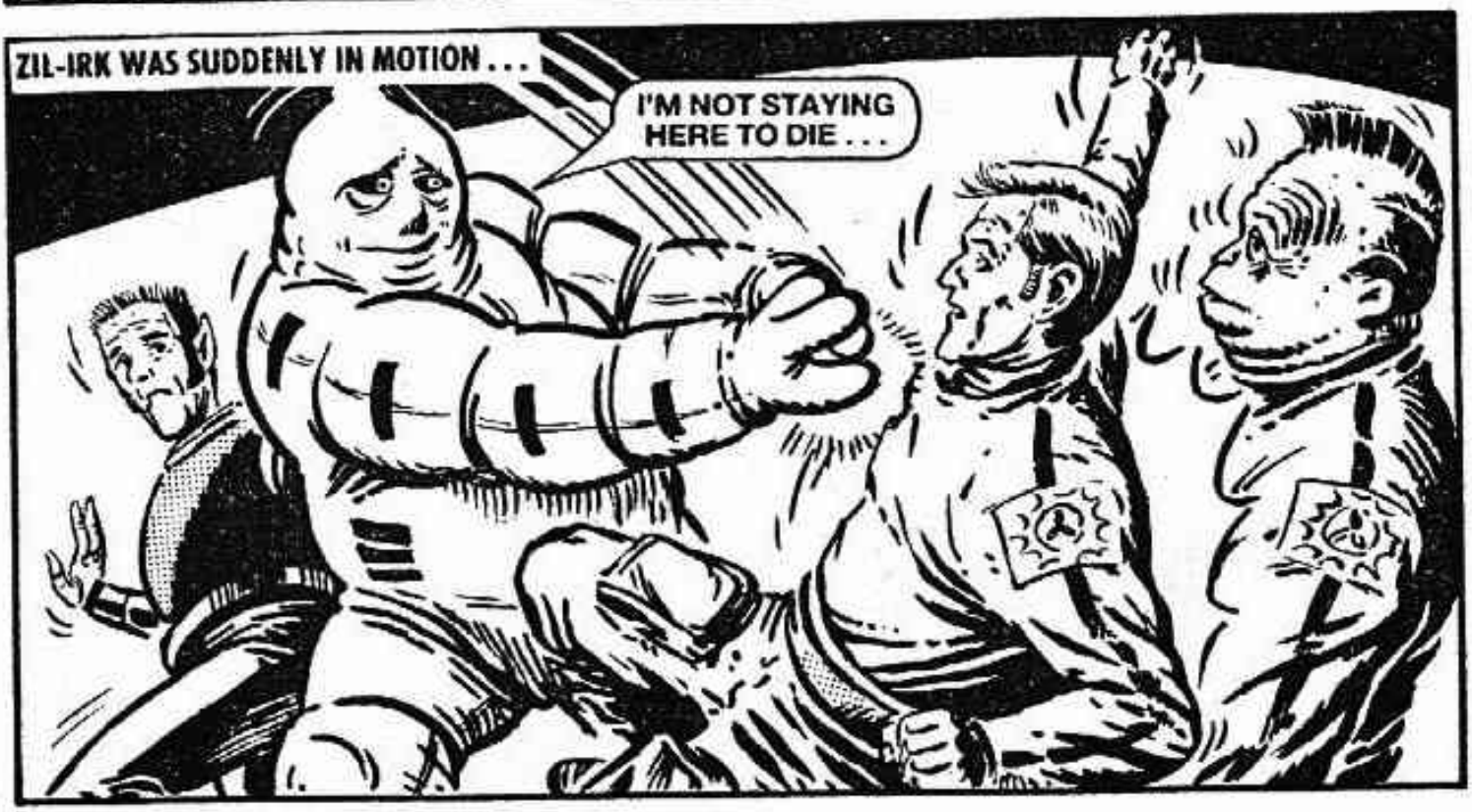
SURGEON-COMMANDER KRANG. DOCTOR EKAN'S DIAGNOSIS IS CONFIRMED. CLOUD DOME GOES INTO IMMEDIATE QUARANTINE — WHICH INCLUDES ALL ABOARD YOUR PATROL SHIP.
UNDERSTOOD. WE'LL FOLLOW YOU DOWN.

WE'LL LEAVE THE SHIP IN ASTEROID ORBIT AND SHUTTLE DOWN.
I'LL FETCH THE PRISONER.

THE PATROL SHIP PARTY SHUTTLED DOWN AFTER THE MEDCARE CRUISER...

THE MAYOR HAS BEEN ADVISED OF QUARANTINE PROCEDURE — ALL LIFE-FORMS TO REMAIN IN THEIR LIVING QUARTERS WHILE MEDICATION IN VAPOUR FORM IS INTRODUCED TO THE DOME AIR SUPPLY.


THERE THEY ARE!


ZIL-IRK WAS SUDDENLY IN MOTION . . .
I'M NOT STAYING HERE TO DIE . . .

STOP!
DOCTOR, TELL MEDCARE WE'LL BE ALONG ONCE WE'VE CAUGHT THAT PESTIFEROUS BLOB.

HE TOOK MY FLIVVER. SAID HE WAS A FEDERATION POLICE AGENT AND WAS COMMANDEERING IT.
IMPUDENT BLOB! WE'D BETTER GRAB A CAB.

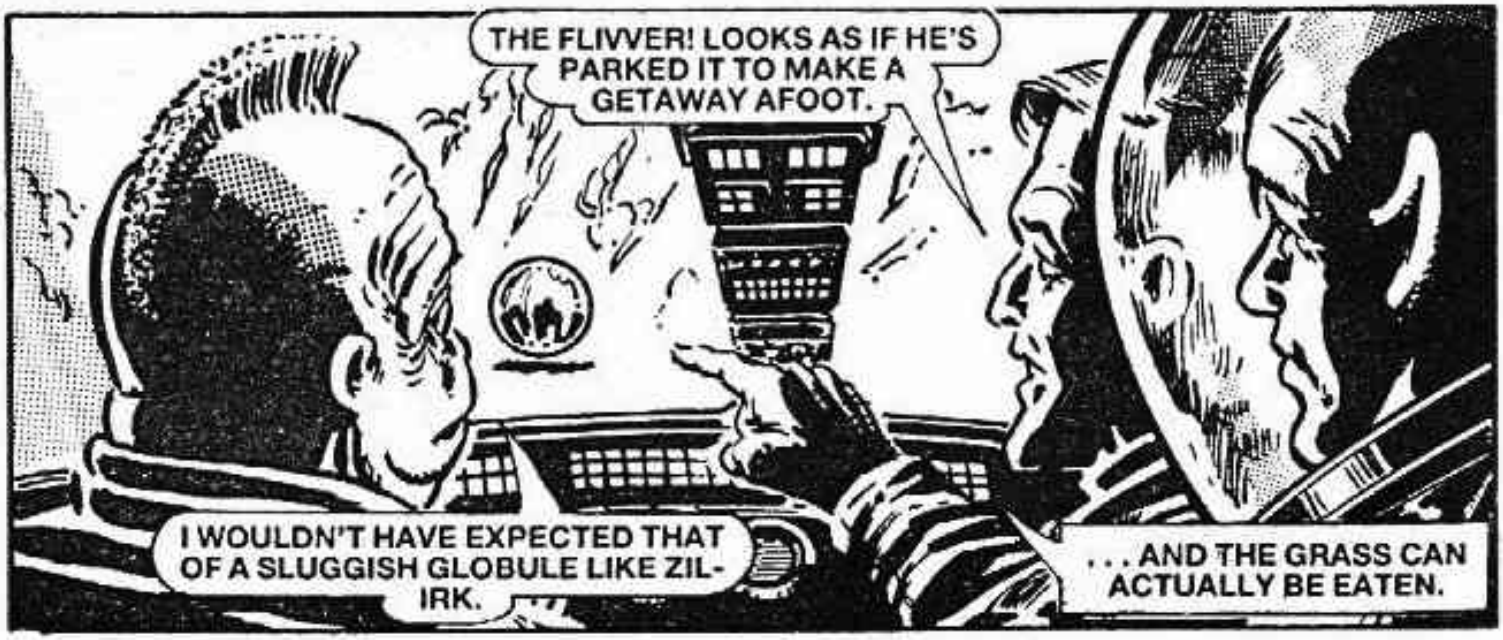
COMMANDER KRANG ORDERED ME TO ACCOMPANY YOU IN CASE OF NEED FOR MEDICAL CARE.
ALL RIGHT — COME ON.

FOLLOW THAT FLIVVER.
YOUR ROBODRIVER IS HAPPY TO OBEY. I SHALL POINT OUT FEATURES OF INTEREST AS WE PROCEED.

COULD BE MAKING FOR HIS SHUTTLE IF I GUESSED RIGHT ABOUT HIS WAY OF GETTING TO CLOUD DOME.

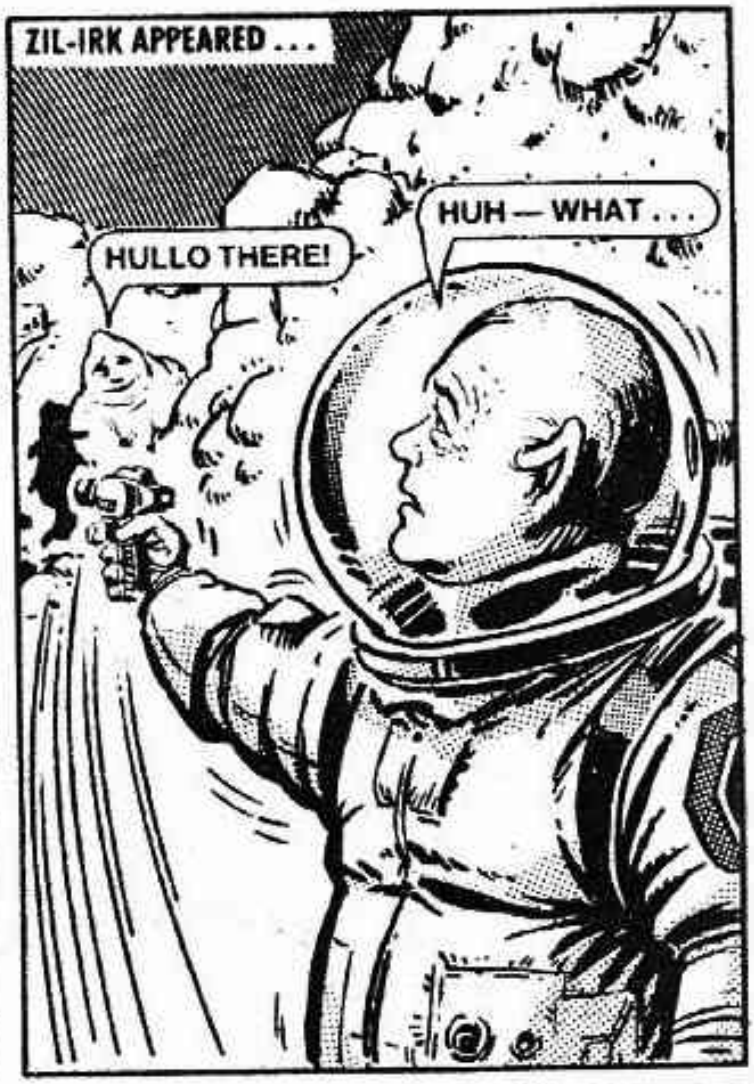
WE ARE NOW IN AN AREA OF GREAT NATURAL BEAUTY . . .
CAB, SHUT UP.

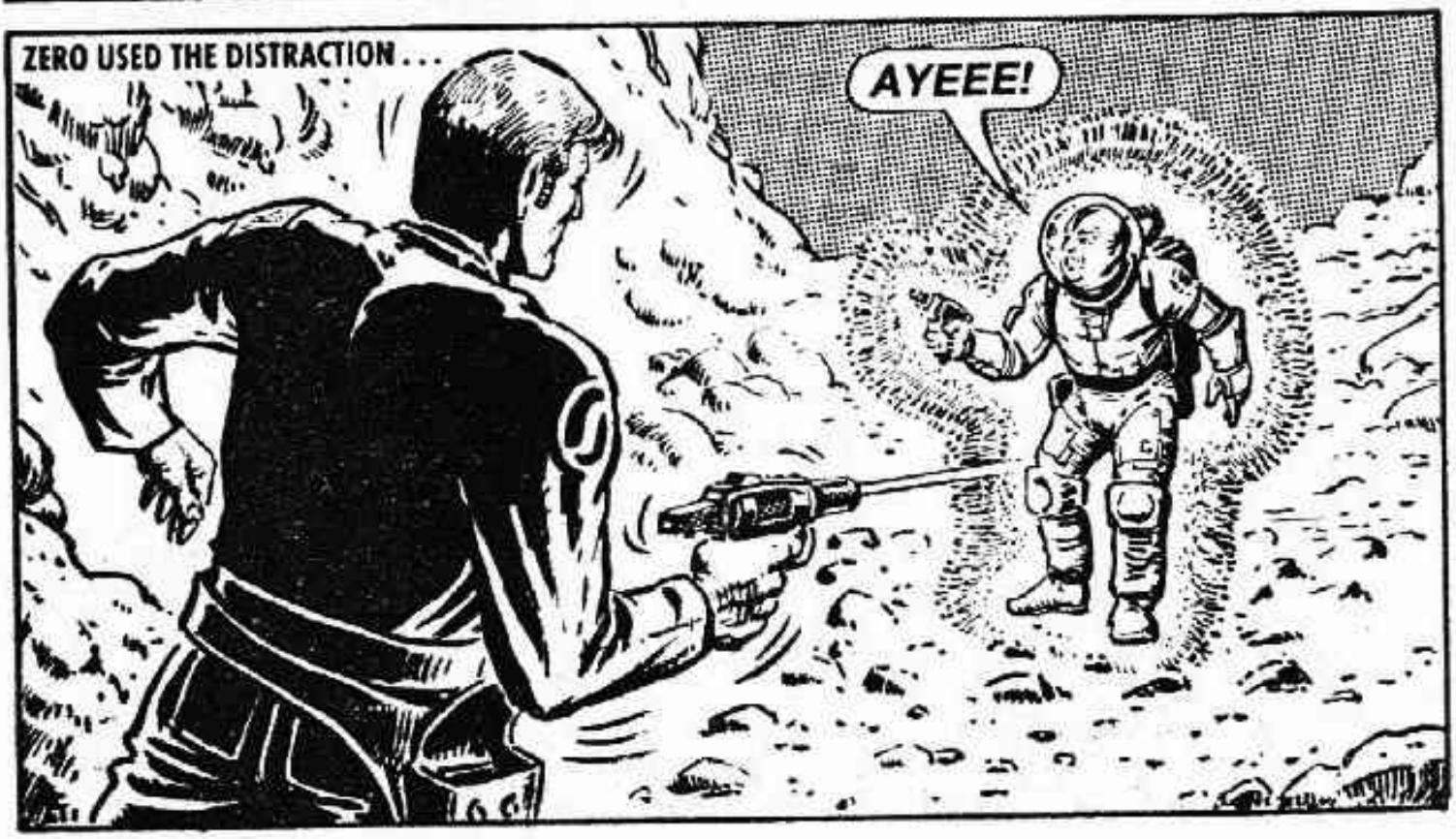
THE CREATURES YONDER ARE EXACT SCALE COPIES.
CAB, I TOLD YOU TO SHUT UP.


THE FLIVVER! LOOKS AS IF HE'S PARKED IT TO MAKE A GETAWAY AFOOT.
I WOULDN'T HAVE EXPECTED THAT OF A SLUGGISH GLOBULE LIKE ZIL-IRK.
. . . AND THE GRASS CAN ACTUALLY BE EATEN.

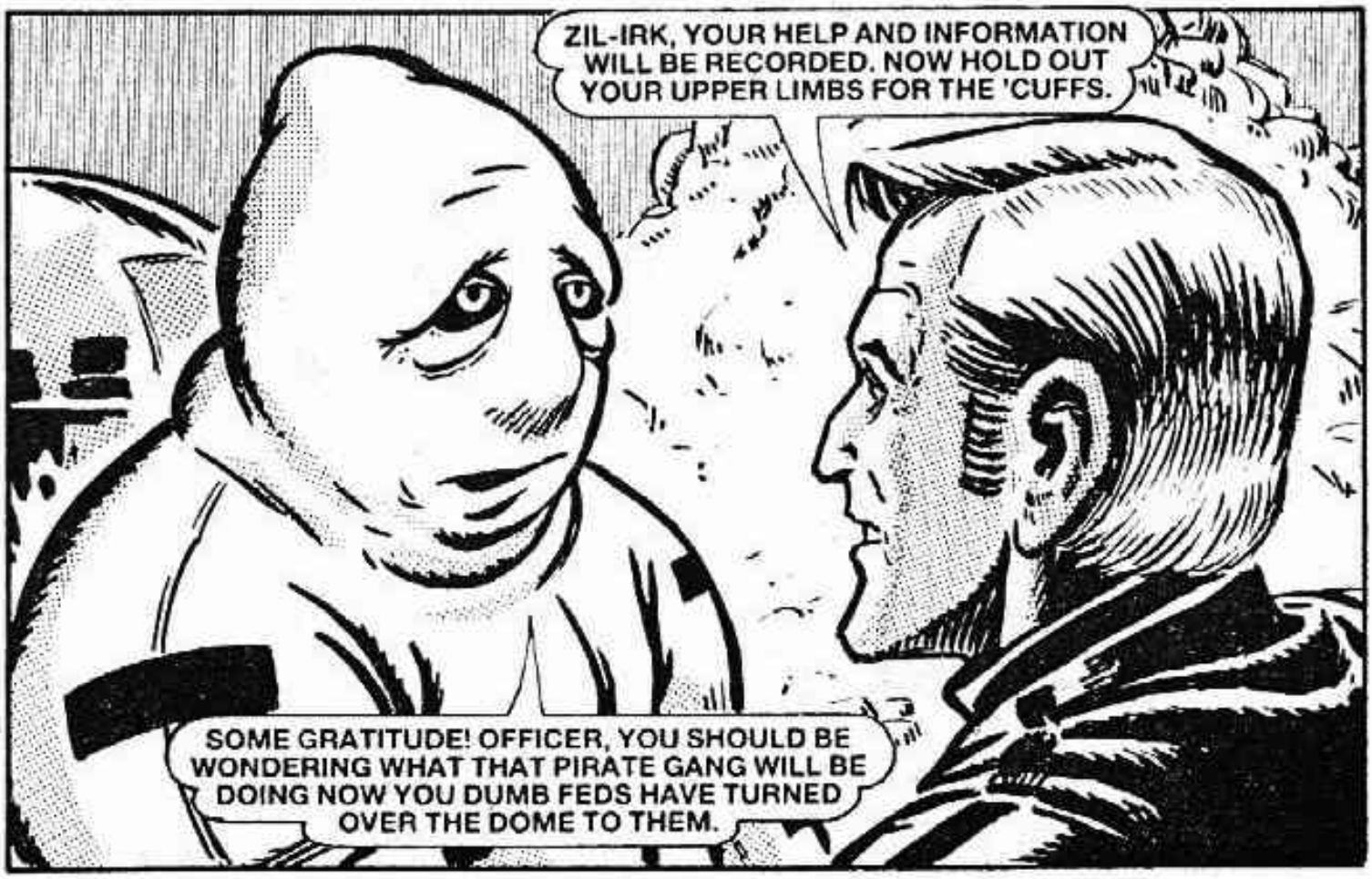
FOOTPRINTS INDICATE HE WENT THATAWAY . . .
A NEEDLE-BEAM FLARED . . .
I SAY . . .
EURGH!

. . . YOU SHOT GROK!
JUST A NERVE JOLT TO LAY HIM OUT. YOU ARE ABOUT TO GET THE SAME.


ZIL-IRK APPEARED . . .
HULLO THERE!
HUH — WHAT . . .


ZERO USED THE DISTRACTION . . .
AYEEE!

MUCH OBLIGED, ZIL-IRK — BUT WHY WOULD A MEDCARE OFFICER WANT TO ZAP GROK AND ME?
THEY AREN'T MEDCARE. THEY'RE CLONE PIRATES FLYING OUT OF MIRACH-9. I RAN INTO THEM ONCE AT ONE OF THE FREEPORTS. I RECOGNISED THEM EARLIER, BUT COULDN'T SAY ANYTHING.


ZIL-IRK, YOUR HELP AND INFORMATION WILL BE RECORDED. NOW HOLD OUT YOUR UPPER LIMBS FOR THE 'CUFFS.
SOME GRATITUDE! OFFICER, YOU SHOULD BE WONDERING WHAT THAT PIRATE GANG WILL BE DOING NOW YOU DUMB FEDS HAVE TURNED OVER THE DOME TO THEM.

GREETINGS! A HAPPY GIFT OF THE CIVIC COUNCIL TO VISITORS IS THE CIRCULATION OF HEALTHFUL NUTRIENTS THROUGH THE DOME AIR SUPPLY. TAKE ADVANTAGE, DEAR FRIENDS — BREATHE DEEPLY . . .

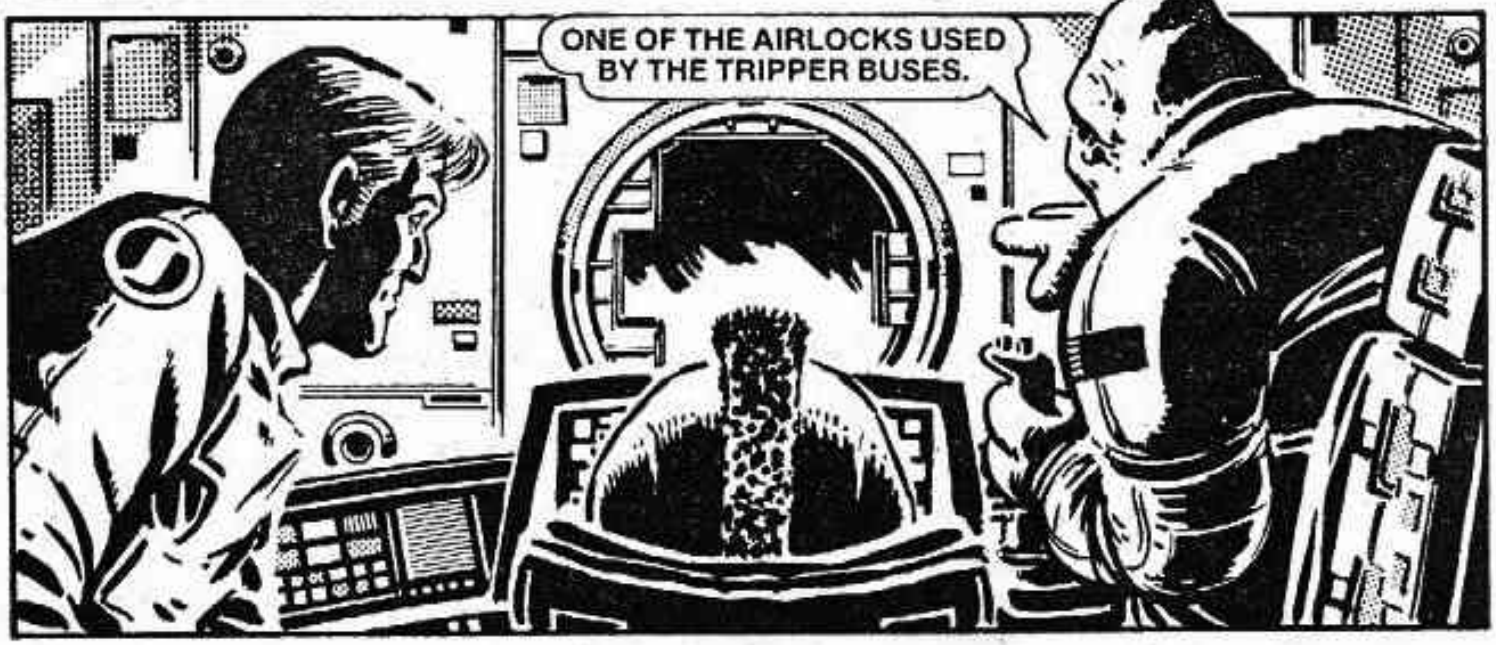
I DON'T FANCY BREATHING ANYTHING PUMPED OUT BY THAT MIRACH-9 BUNCH.
NOR ME. GIVE A HAND WITH GROK.

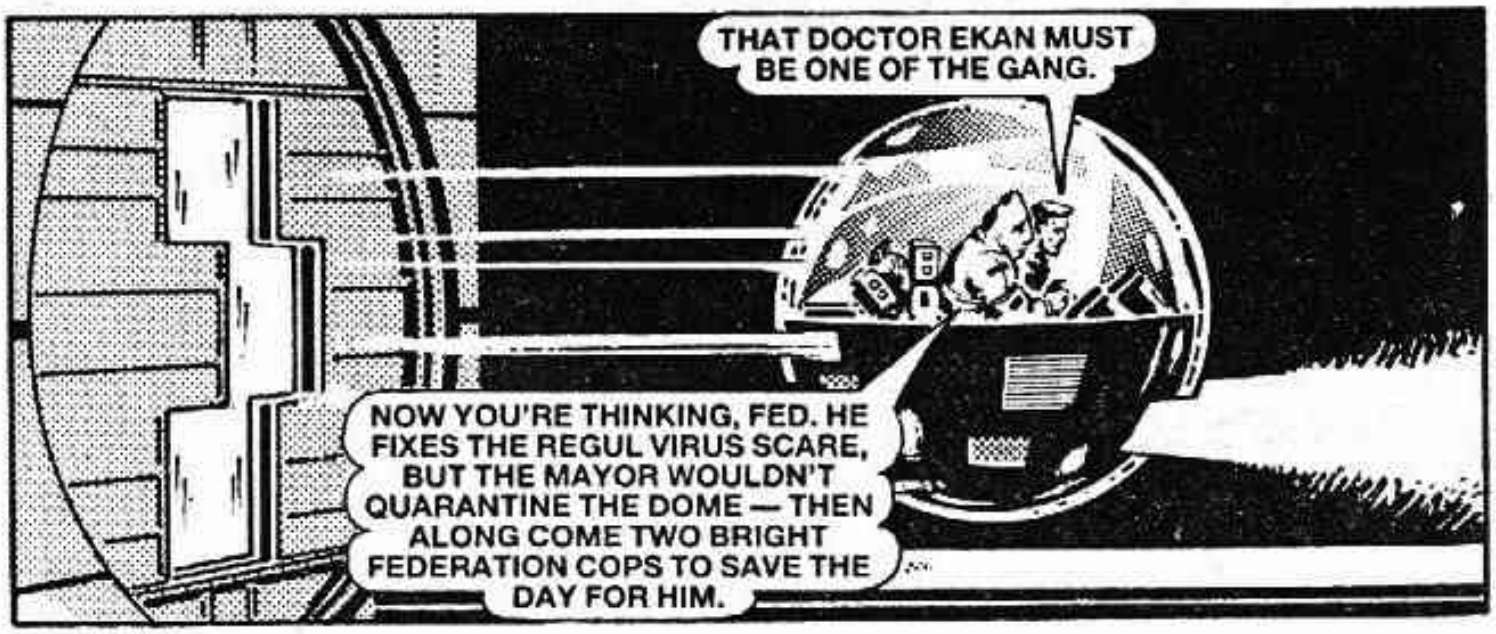
WE SEAL OURSELVES IN YOUR BORROWED FLIVVER. THERE SHOULD BE ENOUGH AIR TO LAST US WHILE WE TRY TO REACH THE SHIPDOCK.
FED, THAT'S JUST WHAT THEY'LL EXPECT. THEY'LL BE WATCHING FOR YOU.

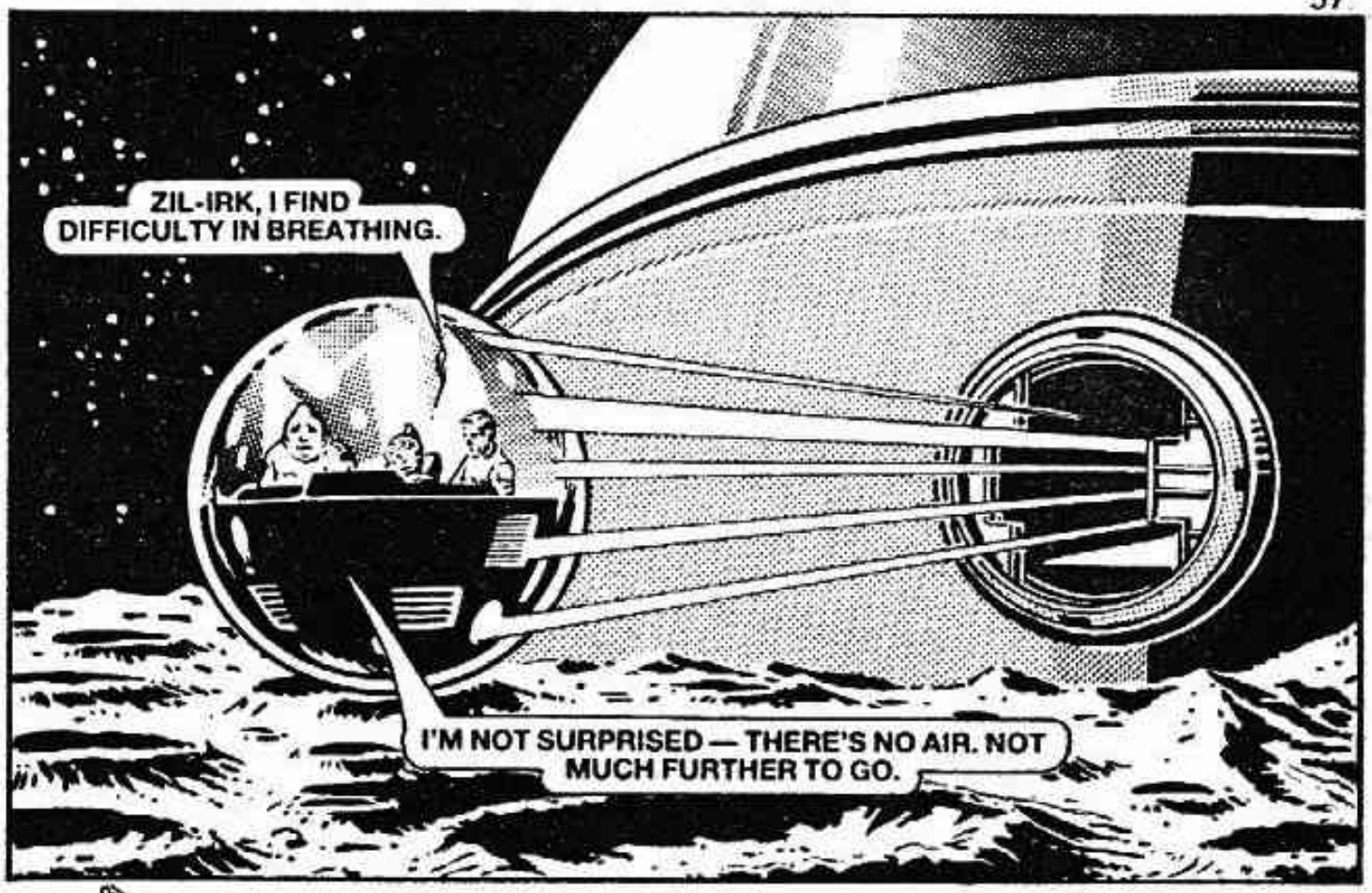
OUR ONLY CHANCE IS MY SHUTTLE. I'VE GOT IT PARKED OUTSIDE THE DOME.
BREATHE DEEPLY, FRIENDS. THE AIR IS GOOD FOR YOU.

YOU ARE NOW LEAVING NATURE PARK FOUR. WE TRUST YOUR VISIT WAS ENJOYABLE.
LOOK OUT!

LOOK AT THEM. ARE THEY DEAD?
NO, FED, SLAUGHTER LIKE THAT WOULD PUT TOO MUCH HEAT ON THE GANG. MY GUESS IS JUST A DOSE OF SOME TYPE OF NERVE AGENT TO PUT THE DOME TO SLEEP.

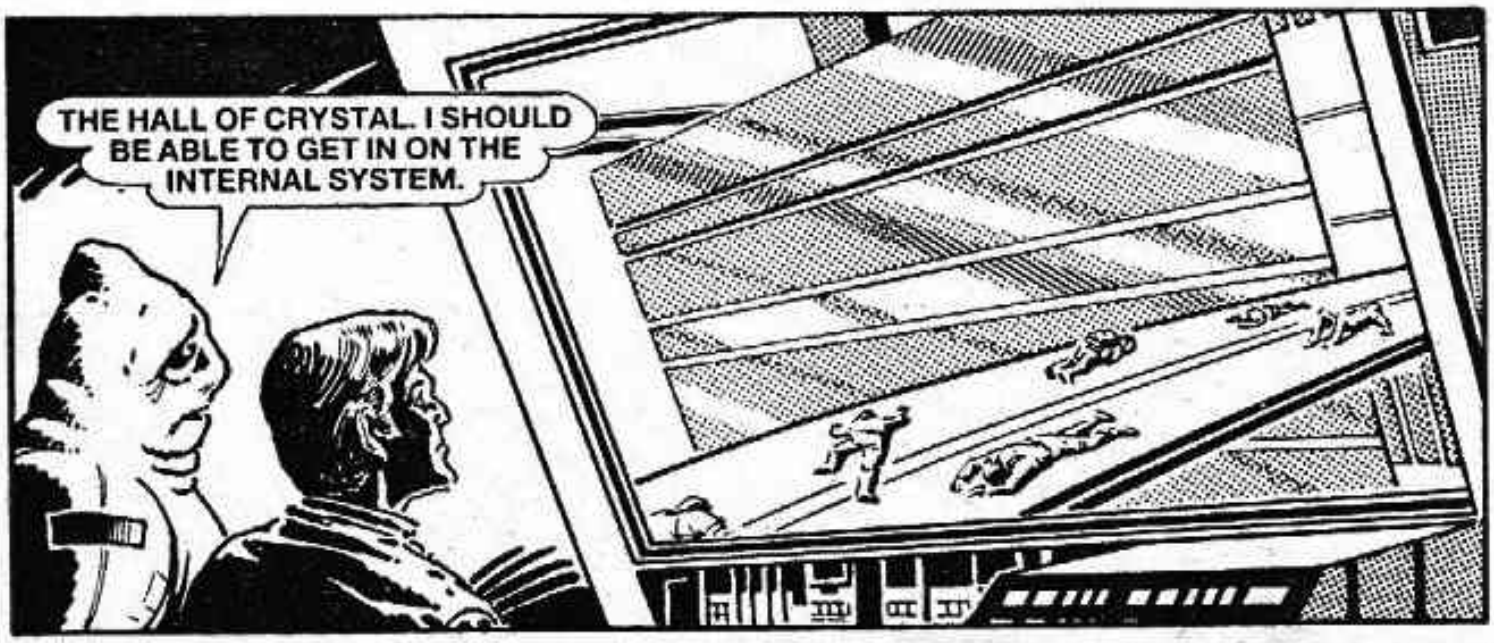

ONE OF THE AIRLOCKS USED BY THE TRIPPER BUSES.

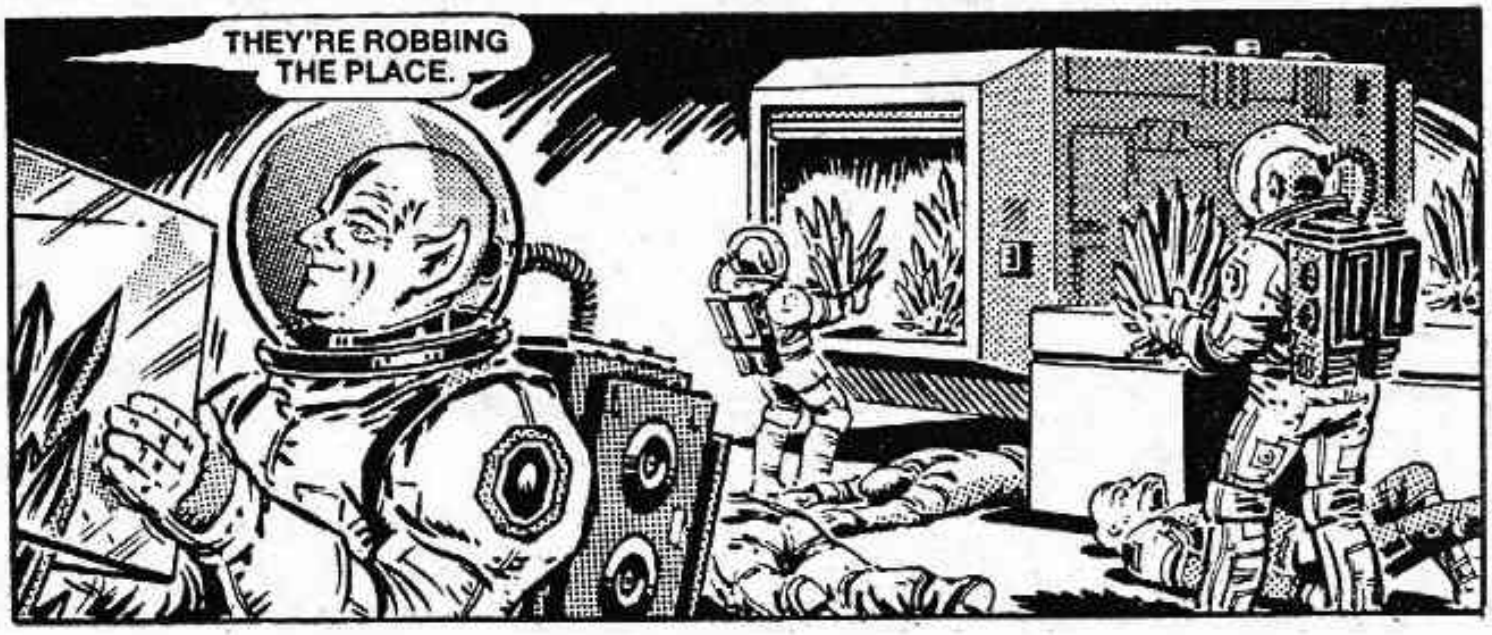

THAT DOCTOR EKAN MUST BE ONE OF THE GANG.
NOW YOU'RE THINKING, FED. HE FIXES THE REGUL VIRUS SCARE, BUT THE MAYOR WOULDN'T QUARANTINE THE DOME — THEN ALONG COME TWO BRIGHT FEDERATION COPS TO SAVE THE DAY FOR HIM.


ZIL-IRK, I FIND DIFFICULTY IN BREATHING.
I'M NOT SURPRISED — THERE'S NO AIR. NOT MUCH FURTHER TO GO.

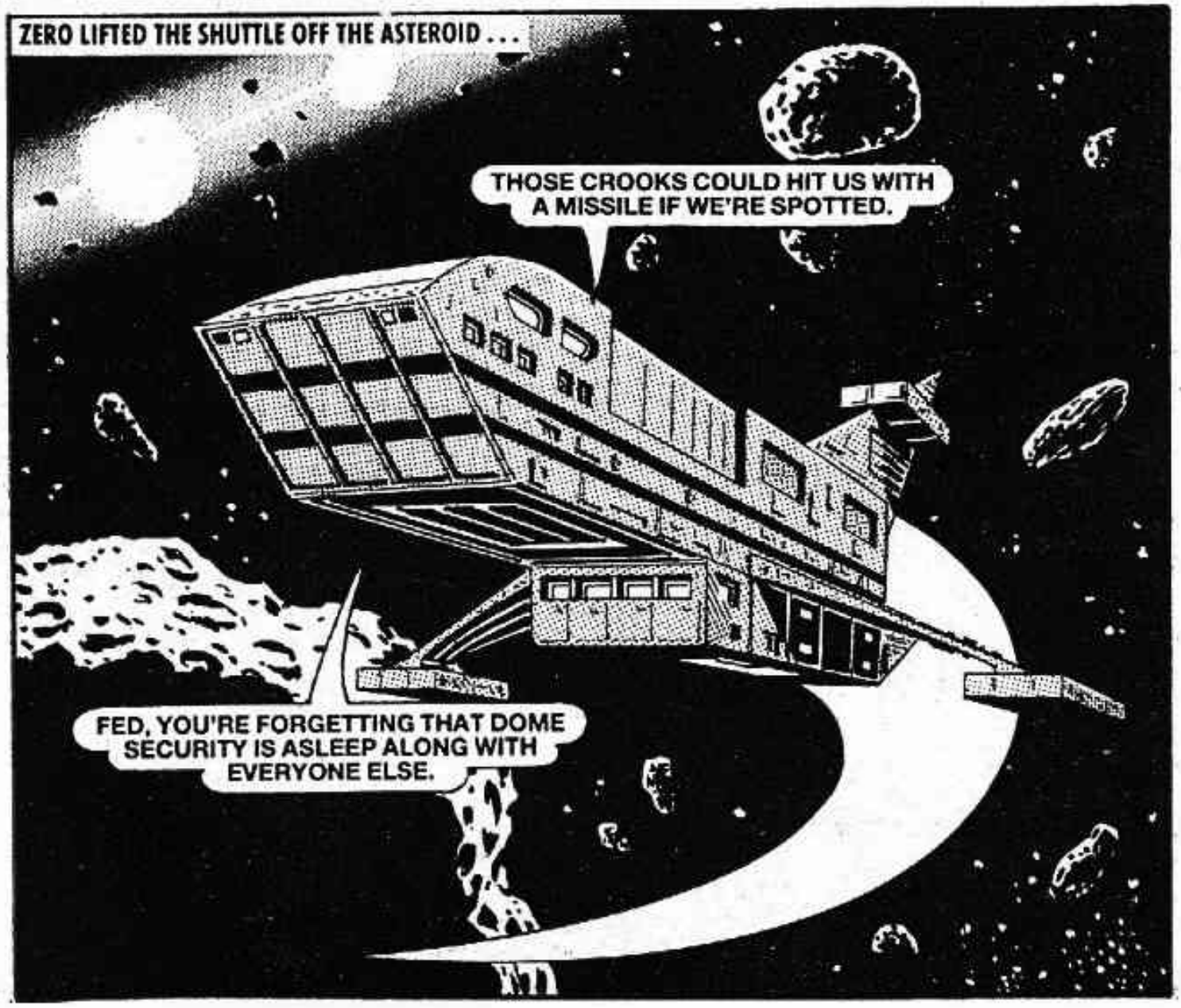
THERE IT IS! WE'LL SOON BE BREATHING GOOD BOTTLED AIR.

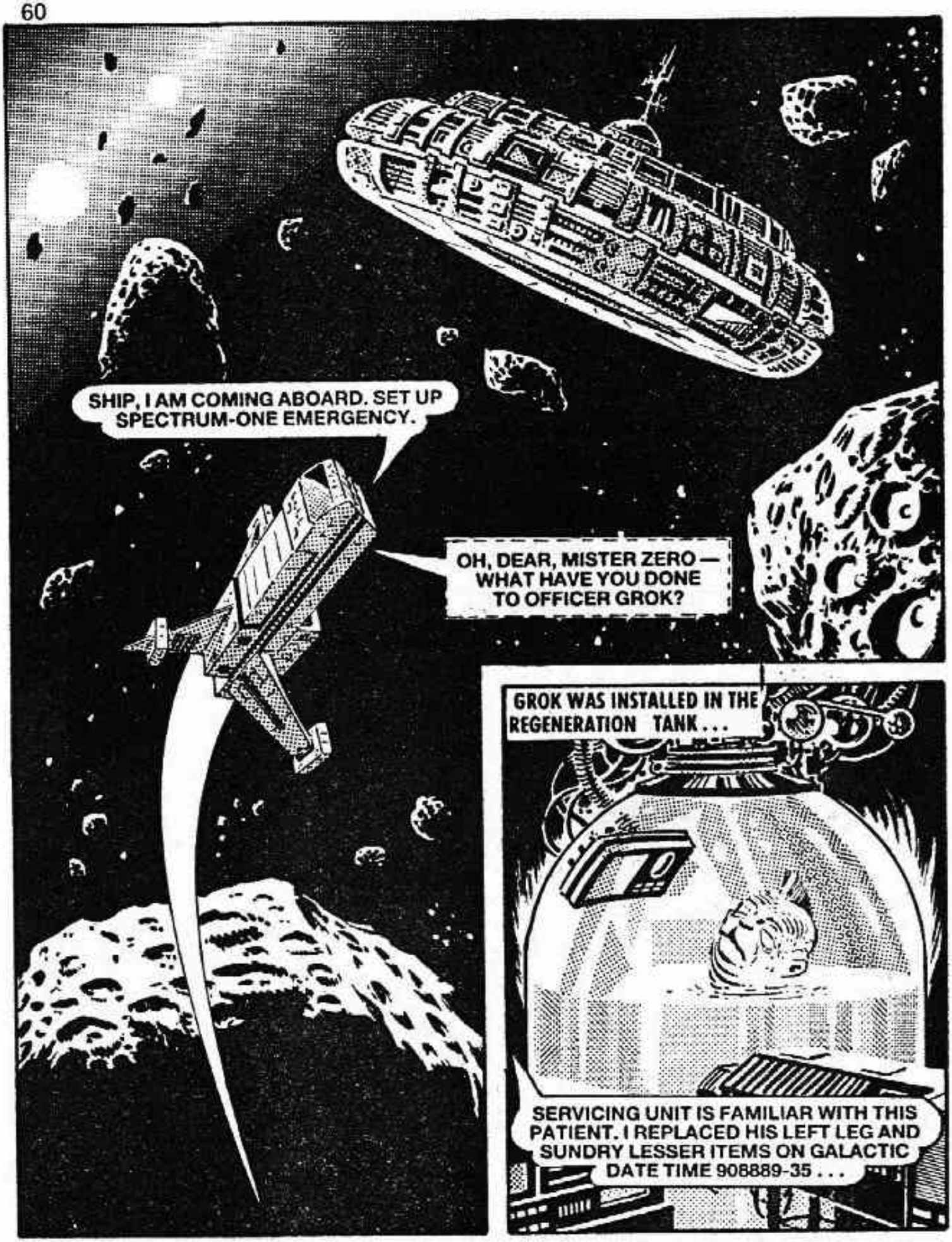
ZIL-IRK'S SHUTTLE WAS BOARDED . . .
LET'S SEE IF I CAN TEE-IN TO THE DOME DATABASE . . .


THE HALL OF CRYSTAL. I SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET IN ON THE INTERNAL SYSTEM.


THEY'RE ROBBING THE PLACE.

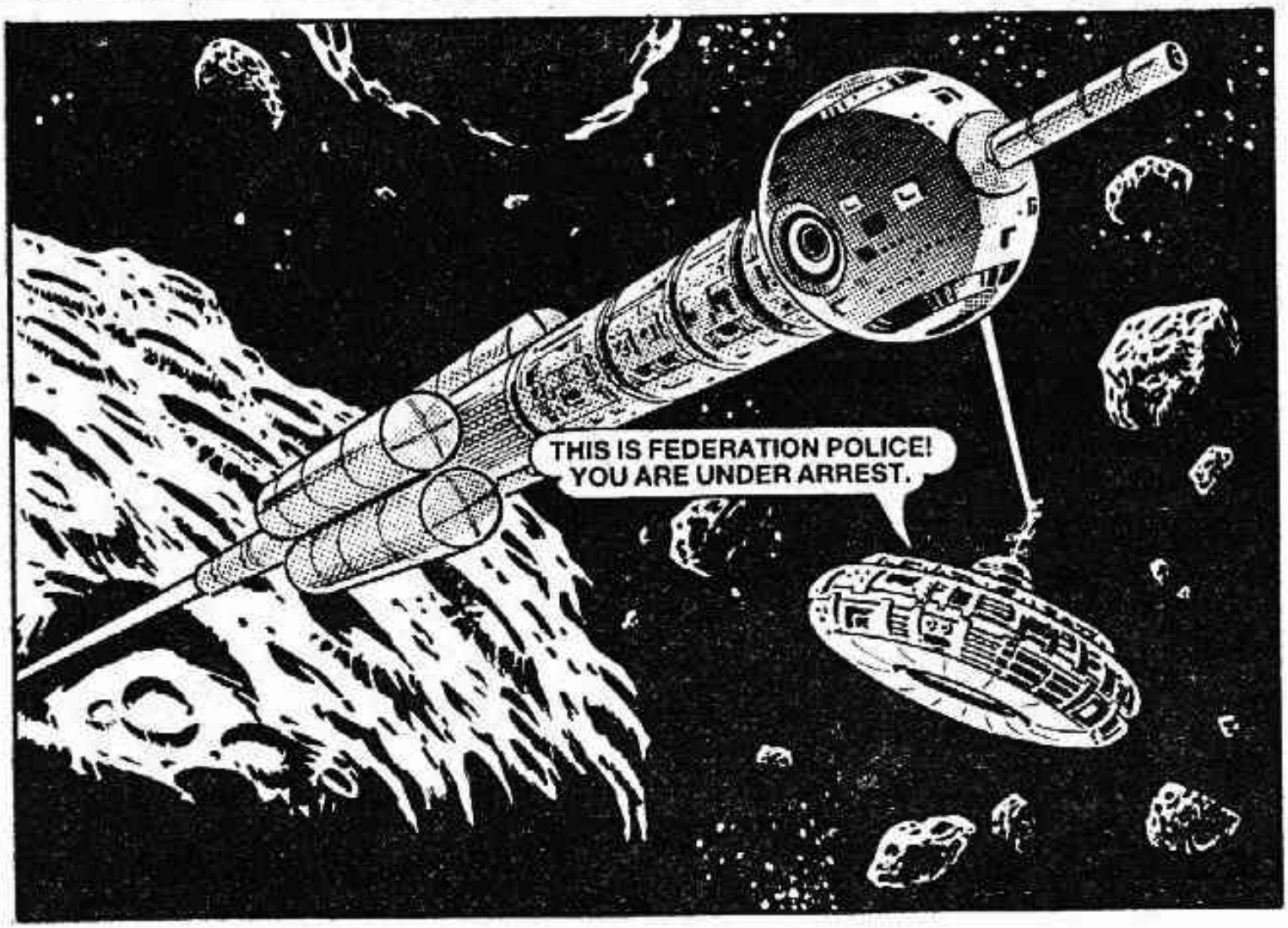
CAN'T DO ANYTHING HERE. GOT TO GET BACK TO THE PATROL SHIP. ZIL-IRK, I AM COMMANDEERING THIS SHUTTLE.
THEN YOU DRIVE! MY WORD, I'M ENJOYING WATCHING THIS. IT'LL BE THE RICHEST HAUL IN GALACTIC HISTORY.


ZERO LIFTED THE SHUTTLE OFF THE ASTEROID . . .
THOSE CROOKS COULD HIT US WITH A MISSILE IF WE'RE SPOTTED.
FED, YOU'RE FORGETTING THAT DOME SECURITY IS ASLEEP ALONG WITH EVERYONE ELSE.


SHIP, I AM COMING ABOARD. SET UP SPECTRUM-ONE EMERGENCY.
OH, DEAR, MISTER ZERO — WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO OFFICER GROK?
GROK WAS INSTALLED IN THE REGENERATION TANK . . .
SERVICING UNIT IS FAMILIAR WITH THIS PATIENT. I REPLACED HIS LEFT LEG AND SUNDRY LESSER ITEMS ON GALACTIC DATE TIME 908889-35 . . .

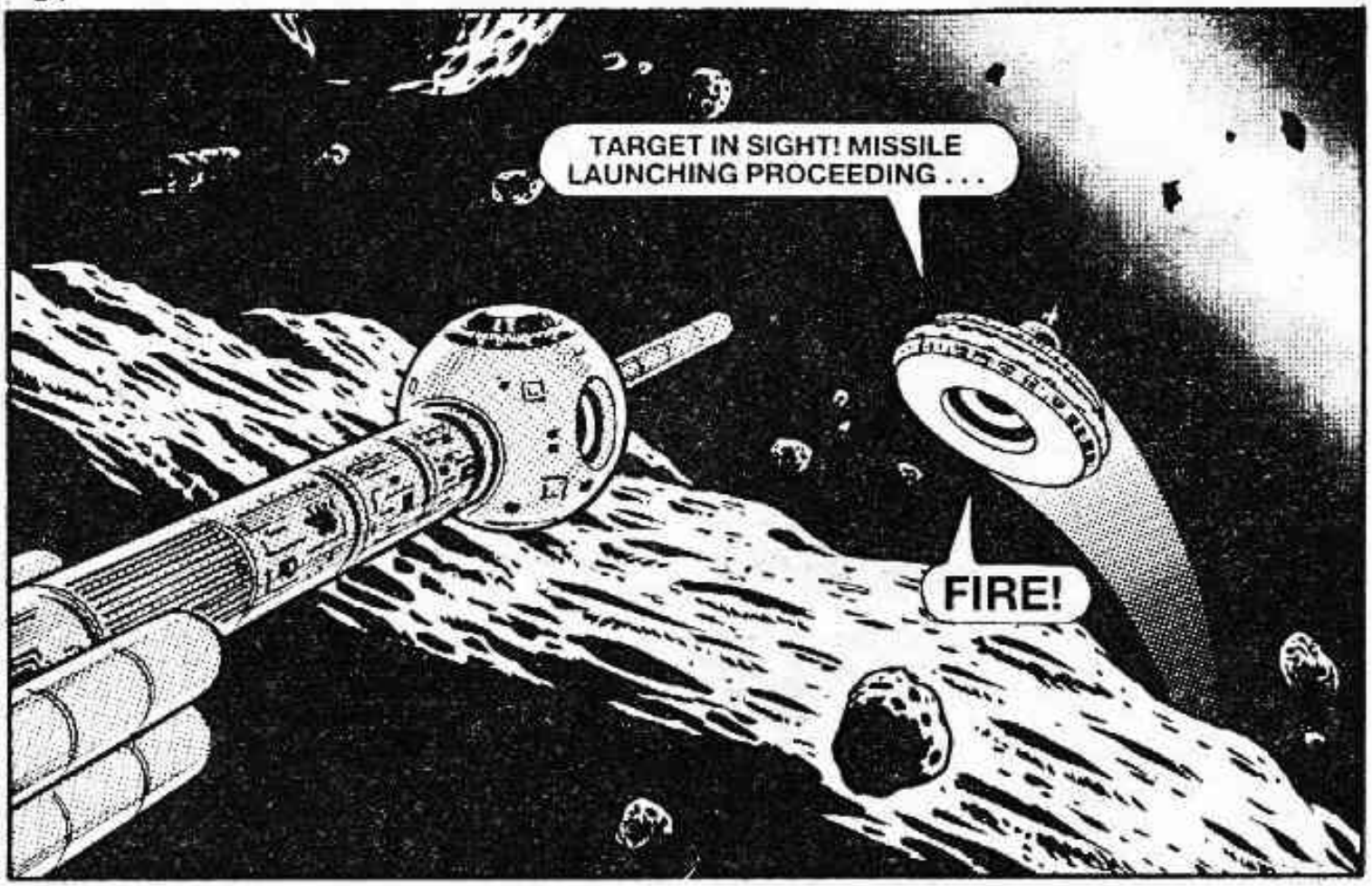
AN ASSAULT WOULD HAZARD THE LIVES OF FEDERATION CITIZENS. I HAVE TO WAIT TILL THAT FAKE PATROL SHIP TAKES OFF.
WHICH SHOULDN'T BE LONG. THAT MIRACH-9 GANG WORKS FAST.

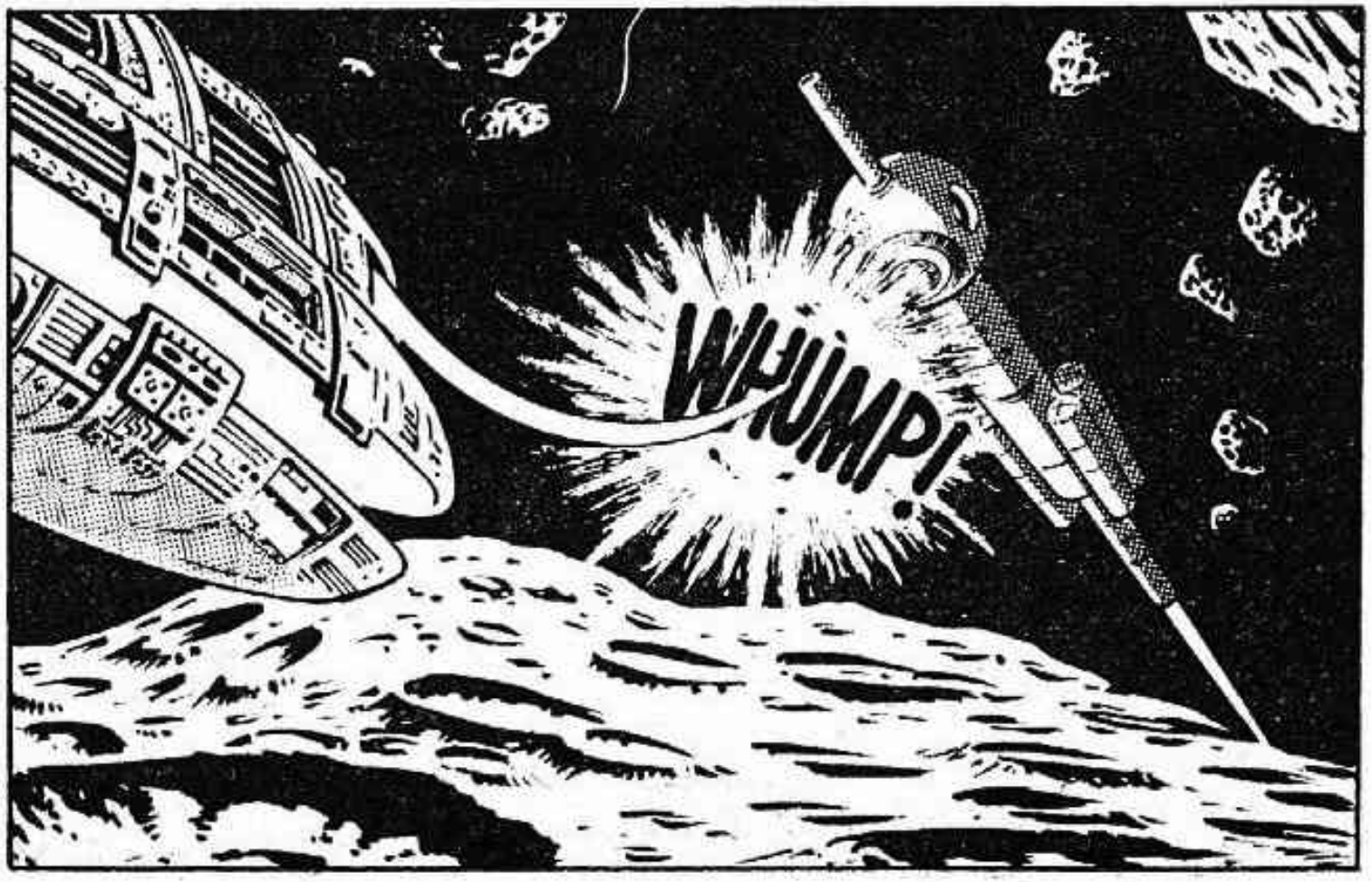
NOT LONG LATER . . .
ATTENTION! SUSPECT VESSEL HAS TAKEN OFF FROM CLOUD DOME.
A PURSUIT SITUATION, SHIP. OPEN A COMMUNICATION CHANNEL.


THIS IS FEDERATION POLICE! YOU ARE UNDER ARREST.

DOCTOR EKAN, EH! WELL, DOC, EITHER YOU SURRENDER OR I OPEN FIRE.
YOU WOULD FIRE ON A VESSEL CARRYING THE RICHEST LOAD OF TREASURE IN THE GALAXY! NO, OFFICER, I THINK NOT.
SUSPECT VESSEL HAS CHANGED COURSE AND IS PROCEEDING BACK TO THE ASTEROID.

HE MEANS TO SHAVE ROUND AND LIFT OFF INTO THE ASTEROID BELT BEYOND. YOUR BEST COUNTER IS TO SWING ROUND THE OTHER WAY.
I SUPPOSE IT TAKES A CROOK TO KNOW A CROOK. SHIP, TAKE US ROUND THE OTHER WAY.
SHIP, READY A ONE-MEGA MISSILE. I WANT A STRIKE CLOSE ENOUGH TO SCARE THOSE MIRACH-9 RASCALS WITHOUT SHATTERING ANY CRYSTAL.


TARGET IN SIGHT! MISSILE LAUNCHING PROCEEDING . . .
FIRE!


WHUMP!

YOU MEAN IT — YOU WOULD DESTROY THESE WONDERFUL TREASURES. OFFICER, YOU ARE A VANDAL. VERY WELL — WE SURRENDER.
A WISE DECISION, DOCTOR.

JUST WHAT IS GOING ON? WHY IS THIS SUSPECT BLOB ON MY FLIGHT-DECK.
GROK — ER, IT'S A LONG STORY.

THE DOME SLEEPERS AWOKE . . .
MISTER MAYOR, YOU WILL BE GLAD TO KNOW THE TRADE FAIR TREASURES ARE SAFE. FORTUNATELY THERE WERE NO CASUALTIES IN THIS INCIDENT.
WHICH IS NO THANKS TO YOU TWO IDIOTS AFTER OPENING CLOUD DOME TO THEM. YOU CAN BE SURE A FULL REPORT WILL BE SENT TO QUADRANT HEADQUARTERS.

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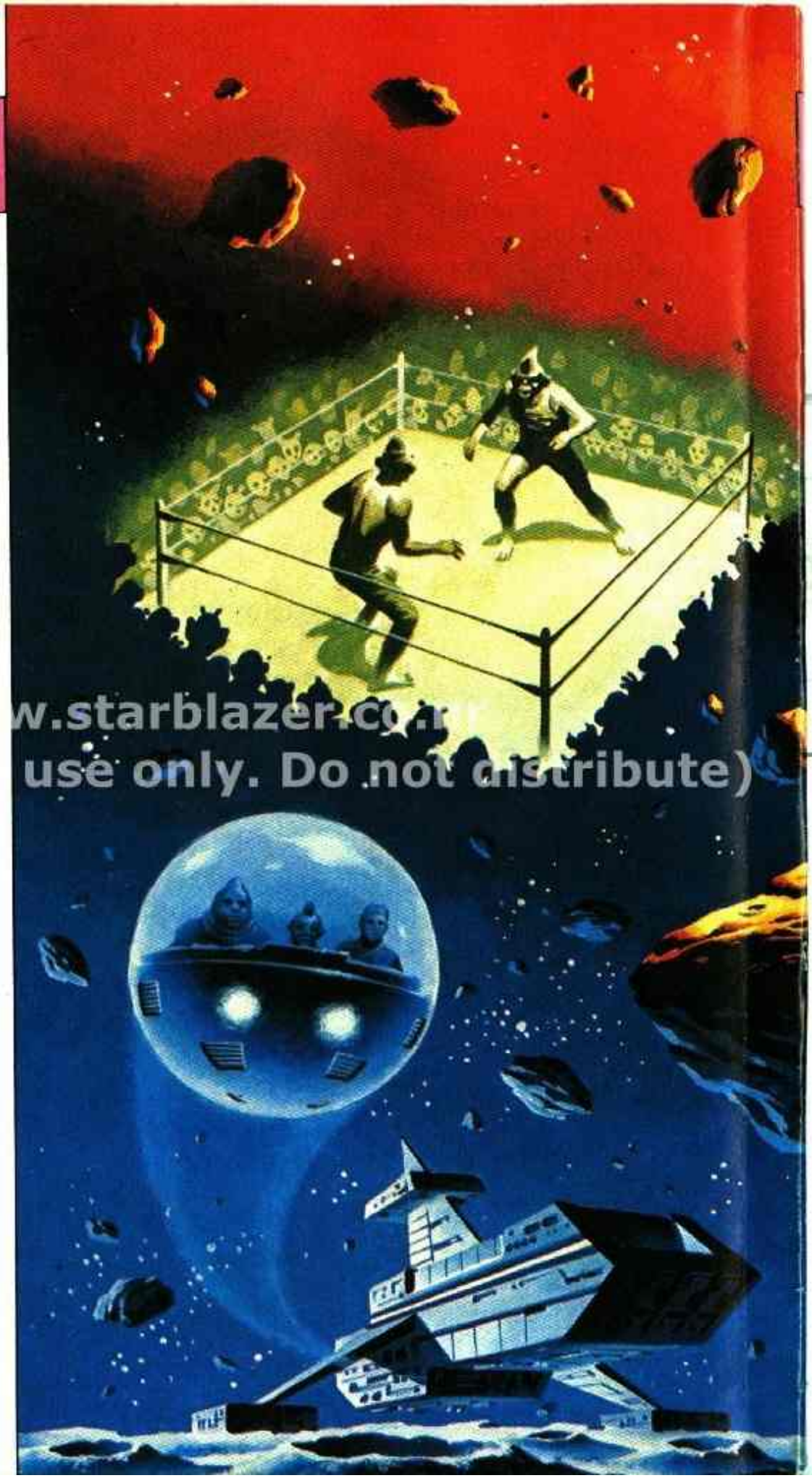
Grok was the Federation's best policeman, according to Grok. And a top cop didn't need a partner, especially when he was a raw recruit. But Grok began to wish he'd got a raw recruit, instead of the idiot, Zero, he'd been landed with.



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